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THE GAVEROCKS

A TALE OF THE CORNISH COAST

BY THE

AUTHOR OF 'JOHN HERRING' 'MEHALAH' &c.

NEW EDITION

LONDON
SMITH, ELDER, & CO., 15 WATERLOO PLACE
1888

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CONTENTS.

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	THE BROTHERS	1
II.	ROSE TREWHELLA	10
III.	PORTH-IERNE	17
IV.	BROTHER AND SISTER	26
V.	MOTHER AND SON	32
VI.	RED FEATHERSTONE	39
VII.	A RACE FOR LIFE	50
VIII.	THE SHADOW OF DEATH	58
IX.	THE UNSPOKEN TONGUE	64
X.	A WOMAN'S SOUL	71
XI.	A STUDY IN DRAWING	78
XII.	NANTSILLAN	86
XIII.	A QUIET EVENING	92
XIV.	THE GOOSE FAIR	97
XV.	THE PEDLAR'S PACK	103
XVI.	'PAS DE CHANCE'	110
XVII.	THE FEATHERSTONES	116
XVIII.	MARSLAND	123
XIX.	STANBURY	129
XX.	A TEMPTATION	136
XXI.	SPRINGTIME	140
XXII.	RETURN	147
XXIII.	FIVE-AND-TWENTY POUNDS	153
XXIV.	A FOUR-LEAVED SHAMROCK	161
XXV.	A LOVEYS' VISITATION	169
XXVI.	IN THE DUSK	176
XXVII.	THE MOSS-ROSE	184
XXVIII.	BROKEN RESOLUTIONS	191

CHAPTER		PAGE
XXIX.	A SENTENCE OF EXILE	198
XXX.	SAMPHIRE	207
XXXI.	THE DEER'S WELL	217
XXXII.	ANTHONY'S WOOING	224
XXXIII.	FAREWELL	233
XXXIV.	'P. F.'	241
XXXV.	ENGAGED	247
XXXVI.	THE THRESHOLD OF A SORROW	254
XXXVII.	IN THE HAY-FIELD	260
XXXVIII.	AT THE GATE	268
XXXIX.	THE WOOF	274
XL.	THE WARP	283
XLI.	ANOTHER NOTICE TO QUIT	287
XLII.	ON A BENCH	293
XLIII.	BETWEEN TWO HEAVENS	300
XLIV.	FLED	307
XLV.	FEATHERSTONE'S KITCHEN	315
XLVI.	RICHARD CARWITHEN	322
XLVII.	DISCOVERED	329
XLVIII.	A STROKE	336
XLIX.	THE LAST CORD	340
L.	AN APPARITION	347
LI.	WANTED: MONEY!	355
LII.	ON THE TURF	362
LIII.	A THOUSAND POUNDS	369
LIV.	THE SPOTTED DOG	376
LV.	AWAY!	384
LVI.	A SHOT	390
LVII.	ANOTHER SHOT	397
LVIII.	ON FOUR OARS	403
LIX.	RECONCILIATION	411
LX.	A BED OF VIOLETS	417

THE GAVEROCKS.

CHAPTER I.

THE BROTHERS.

The road was bad. To speak with accuracy, the road was not a road, but a track. To be more accurate still, it was not a track, but a series of tracks cut by cart and carriage and gig wheels in the turf, and through it to the sparry stone beneath, that worked up in lumps like sugar, but which were so hard that the wheel of a laden wain would not crush them.

Along this course—this tangled skein of wheel tracks, over a moor, bounced and pitched and lurched and dived a tax-cart with two men in it, one very much older than the other, for in fact he was the father.

The father drove, whilst the son sat holding to the back of the seat with one hand, to the side with the other, and with his eyes fixed on the horse's ears. The driver was more accustomed to the motions of the cart, was able to balance himself without holding a rail.

Hardly a tree was visible. The down was covered with short grass, dotted over with dark-green clumps of gorse, spotted with gold where stray flowers bloomed, but covered with bursting seed-pods. Here and there a hedge appeared with thorns on the top, curling over away from the west, and leafing only on the nether surface.

Beyond, where the sun was setting in a bed of quivering fire, lay the Atlantic, with the horizon half-way up the sky.

The horse or the driver, or the horse and driver together,

groped among the ruts for the least profound and the least knobby at bottom—groped with the wheels of the tax-cart; did not like one rut, tried another, then a third, after that went recklessly at any rut that offered, found that did not succeed, once more went through the course of selection, and finally abandoned the exercise of intelligence and reason for happy-go-lucky, like many a man at the outstart of life who tries one line, then another, and finally allows himself to jolt on in whatever rut receives him. In vain did horse, or driver, or horse and driver together, endeavour to find ruts to the gauge of the cart; all the conveyances that had ever gone before and cut for themselves grooves had been just too broad or just too narrow, so that the tax-cart always went with one wheel deep in a furrow and the other high on the turf.

Between the driver and the setting sun and sea, fused into one sheet of flame, stood a house—a long, low house, all roof, except on the side that was approached by the cart, the side that looked inland. As the road was not a road, but a skein of tracks, so the side was not a side, but an irregular face. It was formed of a front with doorway and low, wide windows and two uneven projecting gables, one at each extremity. About this house clustered some miserable trees—beech, that had died at their heads, and lived a sickly, apologetic life in the lower branches, where a few shrivelled leaves appeared. The trunks of these trees were inclined inland, at an angle so acute that anyone unaccustomed to the habits of trees on the coast would have expected them to fall at the first puff of wind.

This house was Towan. It belonged at the beginning of the century which we honour with living in it to Hender Gaverock (the name pronounced Gav'r-ock), a man of some property—in fact, a small country squire.

Towan was situated in the parish of St. Kevin, on the north coast of Cornwall, about four miles from Padstow and twelve from Wadebridge.

The cart in which the two men rode belonged to Hender Gaverock, and contained him and his younger son Constantine, a fine young man with hair auburn—a warm chestnut, and with blue eyes. There was a certain resemblance between the two men, but also a striking dissimilarity. The same features and colour of hair, but the young man

was smooth and refined, and the old one was rugged and uncouth. There was in the father a hardness, a headstrong look in the eyes, a selfwill in the modelling of the lips, a domineer in the cut of the nose. As for the son, Constantine, his mouth expressed much weakness. It lacked brightness and was overcast with discontent. His skin was clearer than that of his father; it was plain at a glance that it had not been exposed of late to the elements.

'There, boy, is mother standing in the doorway expecting us!' exclaimed old Hender, who was driving, and he pointed before him with his whip.

'*Us!*' repeated Constantine: '*me*, you mean, father; I have been absent for a twelvemonth in Nankivel's fusty office—I hate it.'

'Oh, Con! you will become a great lawyer in time.'

Constantine shrugged his shoulders and made no answer to this remark. Presently, after a moment of brooding, he said:

'It is a hard thing that I should be moped up in a lawyer's office, whilst Gerans, because he is the eldest son, should be obliged to do nothing. Why is he not now at the door with my mother, looking out for me?'

'Because, you fool, he is out hunting.'

'He can go hunting, boating, shooting, but I must use the pen and have no horse, or boat, or gun. I am nothing and he is everything. He is the first-born and the heir, born with a silver spoon in his mouth. He has all the love and ambition of the house fixed on him, and poor I am driven into a far country to eat husks with the swine—I mean into a dirty stye of a lawyer's office.'

'You will see, Con, the fatted calf will be killed for you.'

'Oh, I want no extraordinary festivity made in honour of my return, as if I were a prodigal son. I am not that, but most respectable, steady, dusty, and dry. A lawyer's clerk must be all that. It is part of the business.'

'No, Con, you are no prodigal son, and Gerans is not like the elder brother in the parable. He doesn't grumble and begrudge you anything; no one is more delighted than he at your return. You are the younger, and must accept the position.'

The old man was red in the face and sulky. He was

irritated at the mood of his son, who returned after a long absence grumbling and discontented because he had not the place and advantages of his elder brother.

'There'll be something for you after all, Con,' said the squire. 'But wait and see what it is. You will in the end settle near Towan. I reckon it is a place you would like to spend your days near.'

'I don't know,' observed the young man with a shrug; 'I like civilisation. You wouldn't, I reckon, like to be taken by the scruff of the neck and pitched out of this century into the barbarism of a hundred years ago. I feel like that, when returning from a town, with its polish and enlightenment and good roads, to this wild moor—rough, gloomy, roadless.'

The trap drew up in front of the house, and Hender Gaverock slowly dismounted. He was a strange old man. He wore high boots and a waterman's jersey under a rough, long-tailed coat, weather-beaten and discoloured. On ordinary occasions he wore no cap or hat, but a surprising head of reddish-grey hair, harsh and coarse, that blew about in the wind and looked more like a mass of frowsy heather. He never wore a hat except on Sundays and when he went into a town, or to pay a call; then he covered his head with a shaggy white beaver, almost as rough and tangled as his natural head of hair. This day, as he had been to Padstow, he did wear his hat, at the back of his head. 'Hats blow off and blow away,' said old Gaverock, 'but it would take such a gale as would uproot our Cornish cliffs to carry the natural cover off my crown.'

A crimson kerchief was knotted round his neck, the ends depended over his breast. In very stormy and wet weather the utmost protection he allowed himself was to take this kerchief from his neck, tie it over his head, and knot it under his chin.

In front of the windows and main door of the house ran a slated walk the full length of the face. Here Hender Gaverock was wont to pace with great strides in his water-boots. The slate slabs at each extremity of the walk were marked with concentric circles. For, when standing there, Hender turned on his heels when he reached the last slate, and scored the rings when he revolved on his iron-shod heels.

As the squire dismounted he shouted for a groom, but none appeared. Then he shouted again, and swore.

'By Golly!' he said, 'where are the men? What has become of them? I want my horse to be taken.'

He addressed his wife, who stood in the porch, a delicate-faced, sweet, faded lady, wearing a white frilled cap. Although the words were spoken to her, Gaverock did not turn his face towards her, but roared his words into the wide space before the door, leaving the echoes to repeat them in her ear.

'Golly! he does look curious, I protest,' exclaimed Hender, standing with his legs apart, and his hands in his pockets, looking at Con as he dismounted.

Then Mrs. Gaverock came down the steps of the porch, ran forward, put out both her hands to clasp Constantine as he leaped to the ground, her timid face fluttering with smiles and suffused with tears—tears and smiles, the common progeny of joy.

'Out of the way, wife!' shouted Hender; 'don't molly-coddle the boy. Stand back, Con; let your mother look at you. Lord! what sort of a coat do you call that?' The father caught his younger son by the shoulder, twirled him about roughly, forward, backward, from side to side, and laughed. 'Town fashions, eh? my word as a gentleman! What jackanapes you young men make of yourselves, and think to set up as bucks and dandies. Where is Mathews? I want the horse and trap to be taken.'

'I believe, husband,' said the old lady, 'the hounds and hunters are in Nantsillan Grove, and all the men have run after them and the fox. You were not expected so soon.'

'Very well,' said the squire, 'Con and I can take the trap round and unharness. Come, sir, buck and dandy though you think yourself, jackanapes though you seem in my eyes, let me see that you are true Cornish Gaverock to the core still. Off with your coat, Constantine!'

'What do you want me to do, father?'

'The men have run after the hounds, of course. I don't blame them. Let me see that you are not a town fop. Come round to the yard and unharness and rub the mare's ears.'

'I am not an ostler,' answered Constantine, sulkily.

He folded his arms over his breast and looked down, his brows knitted, his lips puffed out.

'Well,' exclaimed old Hender, 'here's a twelvemonth you've been away, sitting on a stool like a broody hen, hatching nothing but legal mischief. Has that taken the manhood out of you? If so, I'll none of you. I'll disown a milksop. Take this trap round and unharness. What! have you forgotten how to unrig a horse?'

'Hender, the boy is tired,' pleaded Mrs. Gaverock.

'Tired? What with? Sitting is natural with him, and he has been but sitting outside a coach a few hours, and a little longer in the gig. Old woman, do not interfere. What I choose I will have. What I order must be done. What I set my head on must be carried out. Come, take the mare out and groom her.'

The tone of command his father assumed angered Constantine. The hectoring, domineering ways of the old man had been endured when he was a boy, but he was a man now, and he was determined to resist.

'I will not,' answered Constantine, surlily.

The old man looked at his son angrily. His face was effervescing with life.

'Lord!' he exclaimed, 'you've not unlearnt country ways in Exeter, I hope. You were always a bit of a milksop and your mother's darling. I bore with it when you were a boy, but thought it unnatural. It is twice as unnatural in a man. You should wear petticoats and a bonnet. But—what have we got on?'

He took Constantine by the shoulders once more, and again spun him round.

'Mercy on us! what a dandy we are!—a green coat with brass buttons, like a buttercup meadow! a pair of waistcoats, one figured satin underneath and the other above it of nankin!' He stood back, placed his hands on his hips and roared with laughter. 'Come, you damned dandified fool!' he shouted, 'off with the coat at once, I order, and unharness and groom the mare.'

Constantine did not stir. His dogged look intensified. All at once, his father went to him, tripped up his heels, and cast him sprawling on his back.

Then Hender burst out laughing, and as his wife started forward to the aid of her prostrate son he restrained her

with his arm, and said, 'A sulky ill-conditioned hound! torn his city coat, has he! so much the better. The rent will serve to let the wild wind in to blow his sour humours away.' Then, without another word, he went towards the stable-yard, leading the horse and cart, to do himself what his town-spoiled son refused to soil his hands with doing.

'Never heed this, Con,' said his mother. 'You know what a delight father takes in showing his masterhood. You must put up with his ways—they mean kindness, though roughly expressed. To any one who knows him it is an outbreak of affection, quite as much as my kisses.'

'I wish I had not returned to Towan,' answered Constantine, rising with the help of his mother's hand. 'I cannot, I will not, endure this treatment.'

'My dear, dear Con!' said his mother, 'you have come home to gladden my heart with the sight of you. There, forget the cast. You must not take it amiss. It is the way in which your father shows his paternal love and delight at seeing you home.'

'I have been away for a twelvemonth, and this is my first salutation when I come home. He will kick me downstairs next, and you will affirm it is to do me honour; pitch me out of the window, and be comforted to know it is evidence of his predilection. I do not like these ebullitions of fatherly love—they may do among Choctaws and Otaheite Indians; or even——'

'Hush! hush! Con! Remember that he is your father; you must not judge his conduct and disparage his manners.' She put her hand over his lips as he muttered something about 'Ourang-outangs and kangaroos.'

Constantine kissed the hand, then his mother clasped him to her heart and burst into tears.

At that moment the clatter of horses' hoofs and the ring of many voices were echoed by the grey walls. Old Squire Gaverock ran out from the stable-yard, and called, 'Back, Rose! Got the brush, eh?'

'No, Guardy! no brush when cub-hunting,' came the answer to the question.

A party of returning huntsmen swept up; with them, on a white horse, a graceful girl in hat and riding habit.

'Come in! come in all of you! Hunters always, proverbially, are hungry. Had a good run? Scent lie well?

No necks, no knees broken? Necks of men and knees of horses?'

'Gerans, take my rein,' said the girl, calling to the elder son, who rode behind her, and casting the reins towards him as she leaped from her horse. Gerans had caught sight of his brother, and ran to him with sparkling eyes and extended hand, and so neglected to attend to Rose. When he turned to assist her to dismount, she was on her feet already.

'Late—sluggish and sleepy as usual, Cousin Gerans!' she said; 'and now, mind that Phœbus be well cared for—he is very hot and tired. Where is my cousin Constantine? I want an introduction, and hope to find him more on the alert than you.'

She looked about her. 'What! that gentleman in tatters!

> Hush! hark, the dogs do bark,
> The beggars are coming to Towan,
> Some in rags, and some in jags——'

Constantine coloured at the reference to his torn coat. 'I apologise for appearing before you in this figure,' he said; but she interrupted him with—'Why! bless me, Gerans? Are you twins? You are so much alike that you must mistake each other for self at times.'

Strangely alike the brothers were—the same hair, the same features, the same build, the same tricks of movement; only in expression were they unlike—Gerans frank and good-humoured, Constantine moody and dissatisfied.

Rose did not wait for an answer to her question. Her quick blue eye had caught sight of a young man turning his horse to ride away. 'Here!' she exclaimed, catching up her habit with one hand, and waving the whip imperiously with the other, 'No skulking off, Mr. Penhalligan. I have just caught you in the act of executing a retreat, when the general sounded a summons to table. Stay!'

'Miss Trewhella, one must be driven from your presence—one is not disposed to skulk from it,' answered the young man, a dark handsome man, seated on a rough cob.

'Well said, Mr. Penhalligan,' laughed the girl. 'There is a polish of politeness about you which is so rare an element at Towan that we prize it when it is found. I doubt not

but that in proper hands something may be made out of you.'

'Anything may be made out of me, if you, Miss Trewhella, will put your hand to the moulding.'

'I have neither the patience nor the skill,' said Rose Trewhella, laughing; 'I am doing my best to civilise Uncle Hender, but the result does not reward the pains.' Then, suddenly, in an altered tone, 'Why is not your sister Loveday out with us to-day?'

'Because I have no second horse on which she can ride.'

'Oh, you bad brother — like all men, selfish. You should have stayed at home, and sent her out.'

'Then, consider, there was no groom to look after her.'

'I have none to-day but my cousin, Gerans. If it were possible for me to ride without a groom, surely it was possible also for Loveday.'

'Every gentleman in the field, Miss Trewhella, is your dutiful servant.'

'And the same to Loveday. Have you noticed how I have pouted all day? It has been because your sister was not with us.'

'How do you do, Dennis?' said Gerans, coming up beside the dark young man, and patting the neck of his cob. 'What sort of a run have you had? How did this mare keep up?'

Penhalligan shook his head. 'Only a cob; I can't keep hunters.'

'How is your sister?' asked Gerans, passing over the reply without notice. 'Look! here is Constantine. Do you see him? He has returned home for a change.'

Constantine came up, awkwardly, with his eyes on the ground; but that may have been due to disgust at appearing in a torn coat. He held out his hand.

Dennis Penhalligan did not meet the extended fingers; he pretended to overlook the proffered hand. 'Constantine and I must have a talk,' he said; then he turned the head of his horse and rode away to the stable-yard to hitch up his beast.

CHAPTER II.

ROSE TREWHELLA.

THE party of huntsmen were assembled in the hall of Towan House. The hall was low, lighted by a long five-light granite window looking to the east. It had an immense open granite fireplace, in which a log was smouldering upon a pair of andirons, banked up with peat, that diffused an agreeable odour through the room. The hall was panelled with oak and ornamented with stags' horns. Towan in past times was said to have had a deer-park, but the park had consisted merely of a walled paddock of some ten acres, in which was a spring of pure water, with some gnarled, crouching thorns above it.

The wall of the deer paddock remained in places, but the greater portion was broken down ; of the deer, all that remained were the few horns on the wall, poor and stunted as the trees that grew on that coast. The horns were fitted into very rudely cut heads of oak, shaped by a village carpenter in past times.

The Gaverocks were an old Cornish family, untainted by intermixture with Saxon or Norman blood. They had married and intermarried with ancient families of extraction as pure, and of name as Keltic, as their own : the Killiowes, the Bodrugans, the Mennynnicks, the Nanspians, the Rosvargus, and the Chynoweths. It cannot be said that they had fallen from their high estate, for they had lost none of their land, but they had remained stationary, while other families had mounted and others had declined. Two hundred—nay, even a hundred—years ago there was scarcely a parish in the West of England without two, three, or more resident gentry in it, owning good estates, dividing the parish between them, marrying in and out with each other, and leaving yeomen to flourish in the interstices between their estates. Most have disappeared. Here and there one remains, who has bought up his failing neighbours, and established himself as sole squire in the place. Among these petty gentry the lord of the manor exercised pre-eminence. He had certain rights over the

lands of his neighbours, which they were unable to resist, and he unwilling to resign. Sometimes there were two manors in the same parish, and then he whose manor included the church-town was accorded the pre-eminence. A silent and mysterious revolution had taken place in the social conditions. The small gentry and most of the yeomanry have disappeared—how is not so easy to establish as the fact of their disappearance.[1]

The old country gentlemen of small estate, but of splendid pedigree, farmed their own lands, and were not ashamed to have their mansions surrounded by stacks and barns.[2] Indeed, in many instances the grand entrance was through the farmyard by a paved way, between heaps and pits of dung, to the manorhouse, which formed one side whilst outhouses, stables, and barns enclosed the quadrangle.

Devon and Cornwall are strewn with these old mansions, like empty snail-shells. The gentry have left them, died or disappeared, and they are converted into farmhouses or cottages. The advance of civilisation had so far affected the Gaverocks that they had swept away their quadrangle and rebuilt their farm outhouses behind instead of in front of the house. Turf now grew where the stable-yard had been for centuries, and a few eschalonia grew before the windows, defied the winds and flowered like alpine roses. But if the face of the house had gained in respectability by the removal of the yard, it had lost in shelter. The east wind now rushed unbroken against it, and drove in at the porch, slamming doors throughout the house whenever any one entered or quitted the mansion by the main entrance. The characteristic feature of all these old dwelling-houses had been that they never looked out upon

[1] The parish of Bratton Clovelly, in Devon, covers an area of little over 8,000 acres. Down to 1750 there were eight gentle families resident in it: landowners, with right to bear arms. The Willoughbies, an elder branch of the family of Lord Willoughby d'Eresby, the Coryndons, Langesfords, Calmadys, Burnebys, the Parkers, ancestors of Lord Morley, the Incledons, and the Luxmores, all have vanished from it.

[2] The old house of the Parkers in Bratton Clovelly, Ellacott, inherited from the heiress of Ellacott, but of more recent date than the marriage, has the house forming one side, and 'cob' barns, and stables, and cowsheds enclosing a quadrangle and opening into it. All the dwelling-house windows looked into this farmyard. A pair of handsome gates—now destroyed—admitted to farmyard and dwelling-house alike.

the world; they were screened behind walls, and every window blinked into a court or an enclosed garden. The courts were sometimes many—cells into which the sun entered and where it was caught as in a trap, but out of which the rude winds were excluded. Now that this feature of Towan was effaced, Towan was a draughty place—battered by storm, piped through, screamed into, swashed about by wind and rain.

Miss Rose Trewhella, who called Squire Gaverock her uncle and his sons her cousins, was no relation by blood, though a connexion by marriage. Her father had married a lady who was somehow related to some lady who had at some time married a Gaverock. Her father was dead, and had left his daughter to the care of his friend of many years—Hender Gaverock, of Towan. Trewhella (his Christian name was Roseclear) had lived in another part of the country, but he had visited his friend annually for a month at Towan, and Gaverock had annually returned the visit for the same length of time. Till the death of Mr. Trewhella, the young Gaverocks had seen nothing of Rose. He had not brought her with him when he came to Towan, because Hender had no daughter with whom she might associate when there.

Rose was Roseclear Trewhella's only child. She was a wayward, spoiled girl; was very pretty, and conscious both of her beauty and of the fact that she was an heiress. She was delicately fair, with hair like gold, and eyes blue as the summer sea, and a complexion so clear and bright that no one could look on her and deny that she had been given at her baptism the most appropriate name that could have been selected to describe her.

On coming to Towan, Rose had settled herself into her new quarters with perfect aptitude, had won her way to the heart of Mrs. Gaverock, whom, however, she bewildered, exercised a sort of daring authority over the squire, which he endured because it was not worth his trouble to resist, and treated Gerans as her groom and errand boy. She was good-natured and lively as long as she had her own way; when—which was rarely—she was crossed, she pouted, and managed to make every one about her uncomfortable. She was not in the smallest degree shy. Brought up in the society of men, who flattered and made much of her,

she preferred their company to that of women. But though she liked to be with men, and be made much of by men, she was dimly conscious of an inarticulate, undefined craving for the companionship of a woman to whom she could empty her mind, of whom she could exact nothing but sympathy. Her mother had died too early for her to be even a reminiscence. On arriving at Towan she had made the acquaintance of Loveday Penhalligan, and had been drawn to her as she had been attracted by no other woman.

Loveday was an orphan, like herself; pretty, but of quite another order of beauty, with olive skin, dark hair, and large soft umber eyes. Loveday lived with her brother Dennis in a cottage, called Nantsillan, rented of the squire.

Dennis Penhalligan was a surgeon, a young man, who had come to the place about five years before, having bought the practice. Dennis was a poor man; his capital had not permitted of his purchasing any other than a very humble practice. He had spent his little fortune on his own education and on thus establishing himself. The neighbourhood was a three-sided one—one side being the sea—and was but sparsely inhabited.

Dennis Penhalligan was a tall, well-built man, with black hair, an olive complexion, and dark keen eyes. His poverty, the hardships he had undergone in elbowing his way in life, had taken the joy and elasticity from his spirits, and had given a bitterness to his mood unusual to one of his age. He was the intellectual superior of all his neighbours, and he held himself aloof from association with them, in cold and sour contempt of their narrowness of interests and pettiness of aim. His patients complained of callousness in his treatment of their sufferings. He did not administer to them that sympathy which they desired equally with medicine. A surgeon who has walked the hospitals looks on his patients as cases, not persons. But when he begins to practise for a fee, he finds that patients insist on being considered persons and not cases. They demand of their medical attendant that he shall have, or simulate (it matters nothing which), an individual interest in them. Every practitioner should place himself in the hands of an actor to qualify him for success in his professional career.

Dennis was too haughtily truthful, too scornful of

weakness, to pretend to what he did not possess. When called to the side of a hypochondriac, he treated the case both lightly and contemptuously. When he saw that the complaint was trifling, he did not make a second and a third call, and this was resented. People are often ready to pay to be esteemed sick.

The result was that Penhalligan was unpopular. The people of the neighbourhood preferred sending ten miles to fetch an inferior practitioner, who ministered to their humours rather than physicked their disease, rather than summon Dennis, who was at their door.

Dennis chafed at the non-recognition of his merits. He despised the old, ignorant, drunken doctor who stole his patients from under his nose, but he was too proud and too conscientious to alter his conduct.

From the hour of his first interview with Rose Trewhella, the fair, cheerful girl had exercised an extraordinary fascination over Dennis. Her openness contrasted with his reserve, her cheerfulness with his gravity, no less than her clear complexion and golden locks contrasted with his sallow face and black hair.

She was fully aware of the admiration she had aroused in the heart of the village doctor, and she was perfectly content to coquet with him, to repulse him, as the caprice prompted and his devotion amused or wearied her. He had made no deeper impression on her heart or fancy than any other man among the many that fluttered around her. If he was regardless of his patients' feelings, so also was she ; in this one point alone were they alike.

The table in the hall was spread. Joints, pies, tarts, cream, cakes, fruit, tea for those who liked, and, for those who preferred, cider and wine. A merry party was assembled about it, of whom not the least merry was Rose, who had changed her habit for a pretty evening dress. Only Constantine was troubled and silent. He could not forget his fall. He had changed his coat, but not his humour. Dennis affected cheerfulness. When in the society of Rose he was happy as far as his morose nature was capable of being galvanised into happiness.

A good many young men and half a dozen ladies were present, laughing, joking each other about the events of the day's ride, or about accidents and mistakes on past occasions.

Presently some one started the subject of the seashore and the phosphorescence of the waves, which had been unusually beautiful the night previous.

'Let us go to the beach,' said one, 'and see whether the waves are on fire this evening.'

The proposal was agreed to by acclamation. The meal was rapidly concluded, and the merry, eager throng of young people swept out of the hall and away, laughing, talking, down a path to Nantsillan Cove.

Rose remained. She was somewhat tired with the day's ride, and did not care for a scramble down the cliffs. She stood in the window, with her hands behind her back, looking after the party, till the last had passed round the wing of the house and had disappeared. Then she turned, and started to see Dennis Penhalligan still in the room.

'Why are you not gone with the rest?' she asked.

'I had no inclination to go. May I not remain in the sun if I am cold?'

'Of course. But I do not understand you; the sun has set.'

'I was speaking metaphorically.'

She pursed up her lips. 'If you remain to enjoy my society, you remain for woeful disappointment. The only good things I had to say are all said; my wit is wholly flown. My conversation is like a pottle of market-woman's strawberries, where the good fruit is at the top and underneath is utter squash. I have but a few notes of the nightingale, and all the rest are twitters.' She took her straw hat and swung it by the strings. 'It must be very pleasant on the beach,' she said after a while.

'I can well believe it.'

'Then why do you not go thither?'

'How can you ask the question when you remain?'

'I prefer to be here.'

'So do I.'

'Why so?' She turned towards him and thrust forth her pretty pouting red lips.

'Because the queen of the swarm is here.'

'I remain because I want to be alone.'

'That is your reason, is it, Miss Rose?'

'Yes; but I am not alone.'

'Very well,' said Dennis colouring. 'I will leave you

directly. It is not necessary to be so frank with me. Will you not sit down?—only for a moment, and then I will go.'

'I can stand.'

'Yes; but I want you to listen calmly to me.'

'I cannot be calm. It is no more in my nature than it is in that of the restless Atlantic.'

'I pray you, if you cannot be calm, be patient with me,' said Dennis. 'I want to say two words to you. They are soon said. I entreat you, be quiet and listen to me. Will you, Miss Rose, or will you not?' He stepped up to her and stood before her.

'Very well,' she said with a sigh and a shrug of her pretty little shoulders. 'But pray be quick; I am tired.'

'Miss Rose, you have behaved strangely to me. At times you have drawn me towards you, as though you liked my company; at others you have scarcely noticed my presence. To-day, although I was constantly at your side, you barely deigned to observe me, to cast at me a look or a word, till, hurt and sore, I was about to leave, when suddenly you turned on me all smiles, called me to your side, forbade my escape, and during supper singled me out for your sallies. Have I offended you? If so, tell me how. Have I obtained your pardon? If so, tell me by what means. Your behaviour towards me passes my comprehension; you are a swaying magnet, presenting alternately the positive and the negative poles.'

'Positive and negative poles! Mr. Penhalligan,' said Rose, swinging her hat vigorously and keeping him at a distance with it. 'You asked for two words, and after a long preface you have produced them. Positive and negative poles! I protest, these words are vastly beyond my poor comprehension.'

'What has made you angry with me?'

'Angry! I am not angry. It takes something to make me angry.'

'Am not I something?'

'Oh, nothing, nothing.'

'Miss Rose, do not be cruel; you torture me.'

'I torture no one. Certain people are like the Indian fakirs, they skewer themselves. There,' she said, putting forth her hand, 'strike palms; we are hunting comrades. Tally-ho!'

'Comrades only? Comrades in the field—nothing more?'

'Certainly not. What more could you wish?'

'I could wish a great deal more. I do wish for more!'

'Have you ever caught the phosphorescent flash in the sea?'

'Never.'

'Have you ever wished to do so?'

'Never.'

'Then do not desire to catch what eludes being caught. Here come the maids to clear away tea. Good-night, Mr. Penhalligan. You had better go to the beach and see the waves break into lightning.'

'Is this all you have to say to me?'

'All.'

He turned away, took up his hat, and went to the porch. When he reached the door he halted, looked into his hat, and then turned his head inquiringly towards Rose. She met his eyes, smiled, and screwed up her lips, and whirled her hat round, making with it complete revolutions in the air. Then he set his hat on his head and drew the door after him. Rose stood considering for a moment, with her slender finger to her lips; then a pretty dimple came in her cheeks, and she laughed, put on her straw hat, and went out; looked after the surgeon, and seeing that he was on his way home, and had not taken the path to the Cove, she threw a kerchief round her shoulders, and tripped lightly down the path to the sea.

CHAPTER III.

PORTH-IERNE.

Dennis Penhalligan walked from Towan with his head down. He was not disappointed with his rebuff, because he had not expected encouragement; because, moreover, he was accustomed to meet with discouragement in all he undertook and at every turn. Some men are never cast down, never have the heart taken out of them; such men are either

endowed with extraordinary buoyancy or with extraordinary conceit. Dennis was not sanguine by nature, he was not conceited, but he was not diffident. He knew his own abilities, but he knew also that successes are for the fools and knaves. The fools are endowed by Providence with luck to counterbalance their folly, and the wise are burdened with conscience, which prevents them profiting by their wisdom.

The cottage inhabited by Dennis Penhalligan and his sister was hardly five minutes' walk from Towan. It lay in a coomb into which flowed the rill from the spring in the old deer-park. This rill did not form the glen, it was merely an affluent of the Nantsillan brook which traversed the coomb. Under the brow of the hills grew some trees, their tops tortured to death the moment they rose sufficiently high to catch the wind, but forming shelter and giving shadow beneath them. Bedded among these stunted and sloping trees was the cottage.

Dennis opened the door and walked in.

'Please, sir,' said the servant-girl, a child of fifteen, 'Miss Loveday be agone down to the Cove. The gentlefolks comed after her from Towan and tooked her off.'

Dennis nodded, stood in the door, considered, and after a slight hesitation moved down the coomb to the sea.

The cottage was on the way to the beach—that is, on one way. A shorter path from Towan led down the face of the cliff, but it was somewhat dangerous. Prudent counsels had prevailed with the young people, and instead of risking the steep descent they had taken the round by Nantsillan, and in doing so had picked up Loveday.

Dennis was not in his best humour. He was vexed at his sister's departure. He knew that no harm would befall her, but he was unhappy himself, and he could ill brook that she was merry-making whilst he was troubled. In this he was selfish. But he had an excuse. He and his sister were alone together in the world, and she was the only person to whom he opened his heart, and from whom he could endure sympathy.

He descended the coomb towards the shore. The evening was rapidly closing in. A warm orange light hung over the Atlantic to the west, where the sun had set two hours ago. The sea itself was leaden grey. As he ap-

proached he heard the roar of the ever-restless ocean, and, saw the breakers flashing over the reefs.

The slope declined rapidly. The glen was narrow, wooded in laps and folds, heather-clad where exposed. The stream worked its way through black peat lying under sand, in little falls, till it reached the edge of the sea-fretted cliff, where it danced over it in a small but pretty cascade that gave its name to the coomb. *Nant* is the Cornish word for a waterfall. At this point the path left the turf, and descended a few feet over the broken edges of a shelf of slate-rock. At this point also Dennis caught up Rose Trewhella rapidly descending the cliff from Towan.

'What!' exclaimed the young surgeon. 'You have changed your mind?'

'Oh dear, yes. I change like the weathercock.'

'In everything?'

'Certainly—in all things; it is not men only who are, as the poet says, "To one thing constant never." Where are the rest? I came to Nantsillan Cove supposing you would not be there.'

'They are yonder. I will help you down the steps to them.'

The steps consisted of the irregular natural projections of the slate rock, which here rose in strata almost perpendicular.

'Lend me your hand,' said Rose. 'Let us move more quickly. I want to be with the others. See! they are surely going into Porth-Ierne.'

Penhalligan led the lively girl carefully down the descent, from one jagged step to another. She leaped from the last to the beach. The shore was not, however, a smooth sweep of sand in a crescent between the projecting heads of Cardue and Sillan Point. The sand was ribbed with sharp slate ridges running up from the water to the cliffs, resembling the dorsal fins of sharks that were buried under the sand. Where the strata were soft the stone had been dissolved by the waves, but between the clayey yellow beds were bands of blue slate that rang to a hammer like a bell and cut like razors. Dennis helped Rose over these ridges. Some were three feet, some a foot high, all were fretted like saws. Rose skipped lightly across them.

'Why have they gone into Porth-Ierne?' she asked

and pointed to a cavern in the black promontory of Cardue that formed the southern horn of the bay. The northern promontory was Sillan Point. 'Surely they are not going through it into Sandy-mouth, and so home?'

'No,' answered Penhalligan, 'they cannot do that. The tide is rising and rolling in at the Sandy-mouth opening of the tunnel. Our friends have entered because without there is too much light for them to observe the phosphorescence of the water, or at all events to see it to perfection. Within that natural gateway night dwells, and there they can stand and see the liquid fire swirl past their feet.'

'Do you often have the sea on fire here?'

'No—occasionally, when the water is warm, and there have been south-westerly winds. Sometimes before a great storm.'

'Is the sea phosphorescent this evening?'

'I suspect so. Observe your feet on the sand.'

Rose looked down. She was treading on sand that had been just overwashed by a wave. As she trod, a flash of pale white light surrounded her little foot, a flash as faint as distant summer lightning.

'How strange!' said Rose. 'The touch of my foot seems to kindle a flame.'

'Not the touch of your foot only,' said Dennis.

Rose tossed her head and withdrew her hand from his.

'See! when I remove my foot the fire ceases. I protest, the flame is very transient, and very innocuous.'

Nantsillan Cove was a horseshoe bay gnawed by the Atlantic surge out of the rocky coast, which rose from two hundred to three hundred feet above the sand and sea. The southern horn of the bay, Cardue Head, was pierced at the neck by a tunnel worked through by the waves on both sides acting on a loop in the contorted strata. This archway was some twenty feet high. In time, perhaps, it would become larger, and the roof fall in, and finally Cardue Head would become an island. This tunnel was called Porth-Ierne, or the Iron Gate. At low tide, with some picking of way among pools, and scrambling over boulders, it was possible to pass completely through from Nantsillan Cove into Sandy-mouth Bay. Even when the tide was flowing, when the sea was calm, it could be entered on a shelf of slate rock that ran in half the way,

forming a ledge on the side, from which the water might be watched as it raced in from the farther side, where the tide flowed earlier than in the Cove. The waves that swept into the bay were reflexed by Sillan Point, whereas those at the western entrance bowled in from the open ocean. The party of young people was entering the tunnel as Rose and the doctor reached the sands. Their merry voices rang cheerily from the black rocks above the murmur of the rhythmic waves.

'Loveday is there?' exclaimed Rose. 'I see her. My cousin Constantine is lifting her now on to the ledge.'

'Yes,' answered Dennis, 'Loveday is there. That is why I have come on to the Cove.'

'You did not calculate on finding *me* here?'

'There is no calculating on what is fickle.'

'You are not complimentary.'

'I attribute to you the quality you flatter yourself on possessing.'

'It is one thing to give oneself a bad character, another to have it given one by a second person. Loveday!' called Rose, and ran forward.

Dennis's sister was only a few yards in front; she was standing on the rocky ledge that stood draped with sea-tangles three feet above the sand. The vast black cavern was behind her. She was dressed in a simple white evening 'sacque,' with a black ribbon round her waist and black bows on her shoulders. The dress was quite plain, except for a frill at the bottom. It was short, and showed her pretty feet in sandalled shoes. On hearing her name called she stopped and turned. Loveday was in complexion like her brother, dark-haired, dark-eyed, olive-skinned, of moderate height, and graceful. An expression of gentle, patient sadness, mingled with great sweetness, never left her face. Even when she smiled and laughed, it was there, overlaid, not expunged.

'So you have come, Rose,' said Loveday. 'I thought that you were too tired to undertake a scramble.'

'I changed my mind, which is a prerogative of ladies. I am a magnet, positive and negative all in one. Your brother said so. Always possessed of two minds running in opposite directions. Your brother has been lecturing me on caprice.'

'Dennis could say nothing that was not for your good.'

'I object to his medicines. I have not asked him to prescribe for my malady. I am not his patient, but his emphatic *im*patient. Come, Cousin Gerans, lend me your hand. Mr. Penhalligan offers me no assistance, but expects me to bound like a squirrel on to that shelf which is little lower than my chin.'

The party moved cautiously and in single file along the shelf into the bowels of the rock.

'We can proceed no farther,' said Gerans. 'Darkness palpable is to be found farther in, and here where we stand is darkness sufficient for our purpose. See! see!—the tide is running.'

A shout of satisfaction from all in the cave. A wave had entered from the Atlantic on the open farther side, and the foam, luminous like moonlight, was seen sweeping, breaking, flashing among the broken strata and rolled stones in the bottom. Then it ran on in fluid rills of light below their feet.

'How prodigiously fine!' exclaimed one after another. 'I have never seen the like before.'

'The water is warm,' said one of the young men stooping, and dipping his hand in the flood.

'It is carried by a hot current from southern seas. It brings light to-night and rain to-morrow,' said Gerans.

'We must wait and watch some more waves,' said one of the ladies. 'This is vastly entertaining.'

'Not many,' answered Gerans; 'we must not allow the tide to cover the sands, and cut off our retreat, or we shall not get home dry-shod.'

'Listen to the selfishness of the men,' said Rose. 'They would forbid us a little pleasure to save themselves the labour of changing their stockings.'

'Not at all. We are considering your skirts.'

'Oh, do not care for them. We should expect you to carry us dry-shod through the water, two gentlemen to a lady, with plaited hands.'

'There! there! another wave!' was the general exclamation. A bar of palpitating white light was seen; it shot over a rocky rib, and covered it with a lambent, silvery veil, then spread in a pool, through which the flashes zigzagged like forked lightning; then gathered in a

shining river of pure moonlight, and swirled past the ledge where the young people were standing, and as it did so it threw out sufficient light to illumine the faces bent down to watch it.

'We must return,' said Gerans. 'This may become not a case of wet feet, but of broken necks, if we delay. The beach is not easy to traverse in the twilight, cut across with the slate ridges; in the dark it is positively dangerous.'

'Let us see one more,' begged Rose; 'we will hold ourselves responsible for all disasters.'

'The next must be the last.'

It was, however, difficult to agree as to which was the next. Small waves did not count, and there existed divergence of opinion as to the larger waves—whether they were entitled to be reckoned or not, when one flashing billow roared in, lighting the cave with phosphorescent splendour, and, by throwing its spray over those watching it, cut short further dispute.

'Go on, Loveday,' said Dennis; 'follow Mr. Gerans.' Then he grasped the arm of Constantine, and said, 'Stay behind. I must have a word with you.'

'What—here?' asked the young man whom he held.

'Yes; here as well as anywhere else.'

'I desire wet feet or a broken neck as little as the others,' said Constantine in surly tones.

'I shall not detain you long,' answered Dennis. 'But I have that to say to you which must be delayed no longer.'

He watched the figures of the others in the entrance of the cave, against the silvery gray evening sky, as they leaped in succession from the ledge to the shore.

'We are now alone,' he said, and turned in the dark towards Constantine, who put his hands behind his back and leaned against the natural wall of the cave.

'Well, say on.' He spoke in an uneasy, impatient tone.

'I want to know—and know I will—what is the tie between my sister and yourself. That there is some tie I am well assured. When Loveday was in Exeter, in the spring, where you were also, in a solicitor's office, what took place? Something—but what, I do not know.'

'What says Loveday?'

'Loveday will tell me nothing. She has put me off with a promise of explanation on your return. She admits only

what I already know—that something has occurred, but she will say no more. She is under a promise, she tells me.'

He waited. A wave roared in at the western entrance, and filled the cavern with light and noise.

Constantine moved from foot to foot uneasily.

'Well,' said Dennis, 'I am expecting a reply. Are you desirous of remaining here till the tide swells over this ledge and washes us both away? Just now you deprecated wet feet.'

'I am awkwardly situated,' said Constantine, and then he paused. Dennis waited. Nothing further followed.

'You are very awkwardly situated,' said the young doctor, putting forth his hand and touching Constantine's shoulder. 'Very awkwardly situated, face to face, in this vault, with Loveday's brother, a natural defender, and the revenger of any wrong done to her. Unless I get a satisfactory answer, I shall fling you over into the water below.'

'Two can play at that game,' answered Constantine Gaverock doggedly. 'My arms are quite as strong as yours.'

'Possibly,' said Dennis, with constrained passion. 'But not stronger. I can hold you here. I could fling you from hence; very possibly if I cast you down you would drag me with you; if you succeeded in that, you would not succeed in disengaging yourself from my grip. Suppose we do go down together; there I will hold you till the thundering sea envelopes and batters us against the boulders, and washes us on the slate blades.'

'You need not become excited and angry,' said the younger Gaverock. 'Why should we not be friends?'

'Exactly,' answered the surgeon. 'Why should we not? I ask you to give me the reason.'

'Promise me secrecy.'

'I will make no promise where my sister is concerned. As there is a God above me,' said Dennis sternly, 'I know that my sister is clear as this sea-water of anything that can cloud her honour. The water is crystalline, and if we cannot see to the profoundest depths it is not that the water is impure, but that the depth is unfathomable by the eye. I am not asking you because I doubt that—*that* I doubt as little as that you are shuffling and evasive now.'

'For Heaven's sake, let us get away from this place,' said Constantine. 'This last wave skimmed our ledge, and the cavern is so dark; we shall not find our way out readily.'

'You shall stay here till I have my answer.' Then Dennis seized both the arms of Constantine and pinned him to the wall.

'Let me go; I will not endure this,' cried Gaverock, writhing under the grasp of Dennis.

'I will not. Speak, or here we decide matters finally. You have had one fling to-day, and a torn coat; you shall have another, not on a gravel walk, but on pointed rocks, that will tear deeper than cloth, a fall from which you will not rise. Listen to me, Constantine Gaverock,' he said in slow, stern tones, articulating each word distinctly and with emphasis. 'I swear before God in heaven, whose eye pierces to the vault in which we now stand, that if an injury has been done by you to my sister Loveday, this gloomy cave shall receive your last sigh.'

Then a boom as the discharge of a gun, and a wall of water swept in, flashing and twinkling, with a head of shaggy light, illuminating the sides and roof; it caught the young men above the knee, and nearly swept them from the ledge.

At that moment Constantine disengaged his right hand and struck Dennis in the chest.

'A coward blow!' exclaimed the latter. 'Is this your answer?'

He would have grappled with Constantine and cast him over into the eddying brine, regardless whether he went over as well, but that he saw before him, kindled by the mooney gleam of the water—the face of Loveday.

The girl had clung to a rock till the force of the wave was spent, and it had left the ledge. Then she stepped forward.

'Dennis!——Constantine! Let me speak. Do not touch each other. Do not strive about me; there must be no mysteries more. The one and only secret I have ever had has burnt into and eaten out my heart. Dennis, brother dear and true, know all—I am Constantine's wife.'

Penhalligan let go his hold of the younger Gaverock.

He took but a moment to collect himself, then he said:

'Loveday, this is no place for you; take my hand. Come out whilst you can.'

He led his sister from the Iron Gate, and landed her safely on the beach. Constantine followed.

They could hear the voices of the rest of the party who were ascending the steps towards the head of the waterfall on their way to Towan. Gerans had prudently taken a lanthorn with him, judging that the return would be in the dark, and on leaving the cavern he had struck a light and kindled it. Now the spot of yellow light travelled like a dancing will-o'-the-wisp among the black shadows, up the face of the inky rocks.

'I do not see why you should treat me as an enemy instead of as a brother-in-law,' said Constantine. 'What Loveday says is true.'

'Then why was I not told at once?'

'I was afraid of my father.'

'Constantine,' said Dennis gravely, 'I give you three days' grace. Tell your father within those days, or I will do so myself.'

'Shake hands, Dennis, and let us part good friends.'

'When you have told your father I will give you my hand, not before.'

CHAPTER IV.

BROTHER AND SISTER.

Dennis Penhalligan and his sister walked home without exchanging many words. They were both drenched with sea-water. Constantine did not accompany them; he took the shorter, riskful path up the cliff. There hung still a soft light in the western sky, sufficient to enable him to climb the rugged way, with which he was familiar from childhood.

About an hour later, Dennis and his sister, dry-clothed, were seated in their little room over a low smouldering fire of wood.

On that bleak coast, where the atmosphere is always moist, and everything is impregnated with salt, a fire is

acceptable even in summer, after the sun has set ; and this was autumn.

Loveday sat on a stool by the fire, with bellows on her knee, blowing up the embers. The red pulsations of light played over her pale face. Tears hung on her long dark lashes. Her face was oval, the mouth was small, and the brow broad : her black hair was drawn back, and tied in a knot behind her head, but high. She possessed a very delicately beautiful nape of neck—a beauty more exceptional than is supposed. As she bent her head over the bellows, with her moist eyes on the fire, her pretty neck showed to great advantage.

Dennis did not speak ; he was looking sadly at her, lost in a dream. What would become of him if Loveday left his house ? He would be quite alone. He could not ask a woman to come and share his poverty as his wife. Besides, he cared only for one woman, Rose, and she was beyond his reach.

'I am glad you know all,' said Loveday, looking up at him, resting the bellows on her knee, and her right hand on the bellows and her face in her hand. 'I have been so unhappy, dear Dennis, in having a secret to keep from you—I felt burdened, as with a crime.'

'I do not know all, sister,' answered the doctor ; 'I know nothing but the bald fact.'

She put her finger into her bosom and drew forth a little gold ring, suspended about her neck by a blue silk thread. 'Here, Dennis, is my wedding ring. I was married at Exeter in the spring. I know it was very wrong of me not to ask your leave beforehand, and wrong again of me not to tell you afterwards, but—but Constantine begged me so earnestly to keep the secret, and I thought he intended to write home and tell all. I could not refuse him, thinking it was for a short while only. I know now that I ought to have refused, but I did not, and it has made me miserable ever since. You have no secrets that you keep from me, Dennis, only one that you have not spoken of, but it is one I have guessed for myself.'

He sighed and looked into the fire.

'Only another hopeless dream,' he said, 'like so many others that have preceded it, and burnt themselves away as fire castles into dead ash.'

'Why should you be discouraged, Dennis?' asked the girl, with her face full of sweet pity and love. 'There is not a finer person of a man than you in all the country side, none certainly with half your brains.'

'Brains, Loveday,' said he with a faint sneer—'brains are of no account here. A certain amount of brain is needed to appreciate brain. Never mind me, we are speaking about yourself.'

'I will tell you everything now. I would have told you all when I came back from Exeter—but I might not. You have seen that I was hiding something from you. You know I have never hidden anything before; and it gave you trouble. Not more trouble, Dennis, than it gave me. You little know the tears and heartaches my foolish promise occasioned. I wrote again and again to Con, to ask him to release me, but he would not; he always bade me wait till his return. Now he is home it has come out.'

'Yes,' said Dennis, gloomily, 'most reluctantly.'

'You must forgive him,' pleaded Loveday. 'Poor fellow, he is so unhappily situated. You know well enough what a rough, imperious old man Hender Gaverock is. Both his sons and his wife are afraid of him. Gerans and Con have been brought up to dread his anger. Con is not, like Gerans, the heir to the estate; he is the younger son, and must shift for himself, he is quite dependent on his father. He is now in a solicitor's office, and in time will be able to support himself, perhaps in another year. Till then he is subject to the old squire, and—as you know, Dennis—there is no telling what Mr. Gaverock might do if he knew that his son had married without consulting him.'

'This is all well enough,' said Penhalligan, 'but, Loveday, it does not explain why Constantine married you on the sly.'

'We have loved each other for some years—let me see, Dennis, it is six since you bought this practice—well, ever since we knew each other we have been attached. You saw it, you made no objection.'

'I did not suppose it meant anything serious, when Constantine was without the means of living, and of supporting a wife.'

'Then he was in an office for a while at Padstow, learning his business, and after that he went to his uncle in

Exeter—his mother's brother. I do not suppose he will be taken into partnership, because Mr. Nankivel has a son in the office, but Con is sure that before long he will earn his own livelihood; in time he will set up for himself at Padstow, and the family interest will bring him clients.'

'Still,' said the young surgeon—'still, I do not see the reason why he persuaded you to marry him secretly.'

Loveday sighed. 'I know it was very wrong. But, Dennis, we loved each other so dearly. Look here, brother dear,' she said, brightening, and glancing into his eyes, 'suppose you found that Rose loved you, and you had the chance. Would you stop to ask old Squire Gaverock's consent? Would you not marry her and defy the future?'

Dennis's dark complexion deepened. He turned his face aside from his sister's scrutinising gaze. After a pause he said slowly, 'Loveday, Gaverock is not my father, and—Why has not Constantine done that very thing, confess his act manfully, and defy the future?'

'He is going to—he promised you that he would tell all.'

'Excuse me, Loveday, he did not. I threatened him that if he did not I would. I do not like his behaviour; it is neither open nor honourable.'

'You must not misjudge him. Remember what old Squire Gaverock is. A man would think twice before he told him anything, he is so violent, so wilful.'

'That may be. Gaverock is all you say—but still the question remains unanswered. Why did you marry?'

'Because—because——' Loveday sank on her knees before her brother, threw her arms round his neck, buried her face in his breast, and said, 'We were so fond of each other. He was alone in the world——'

'How alone? He has father, and mother, and brother.'

'Yes; but his tastes, and his feelings, are so different from theirs. He has a cultivated mind, which Gerans has not; and at Exeter he had no one. He was so delighted to see me when I arrived there, and I—I was alone.'

'How so? You have me, your brother.'

'Yes, darling Dennis; a true, good, strong brother you have been. But when I was at Exeter I felt very solitary. My cousin was different in everything from me, and I was so happy to meet Con again.'

'Well, Loveday.'

'Well, Dennis; we were young things, and both away from our relations—I from you, and he from his parents—and when he proposed that we should take advantage of the chance and get married, and spoke of his prospects, and everything looked sunny before us, I was very unwise, I consented. But from the moment I consented, and promised not to tell you, or any one, my peace of mind was gone. I assure you, brother, when I undertook to be silent, I had no idea that he meant me to keep the secret so long; I thought he intended me to hold my tongue only till he had been home and told all himself. Perhaps he did mean so—but he did not return to Towan till to-day, and I have been home for six months.

'He acted very wrongly,' said the young surgeon gravely; 'he placed you in a very false position. I can never forgive him that, whatever he may do to relieve you by an open declaration of the truth now. He acted in a selfish, inconsiderate manner.'

'Forgive him, Dennis,' pleaded the girl, putting her hands together. 'He loved me so very much. Do you not understand, brother, that in love one may act very foolishly and only find that out later?'

'Loveday,' said Dennis, after a moment's consideration, 'I ought not to have been left in the dark, not for an hour. Had I known, you should not have returned here without your ring, and bearing your maiden name. I shall never respect Constantine for having suffered this. A man should not allow the chance of a breath to fall on and sully the clear, bright surface of his wife's name. Constantine has wilfully exposed it to a stain.'

'Do not accuse him,' exclaimed his sister, again clasping him in her arms, whilst her tears flowed. 'I cannot bear it, Dennis. Remember what he is to me. We all make mistakes and rue them afterwards. Our judgments are at fault, not our hearts.'

Dennis stood up, folded his arms, and paced the room, with his head on his breast.

'We shall see what happens within three days,' said he. 'My mind misgives me. I do not trust him. But——' He drew a long breath. 'Is not this of a piece with all that comes on us? Everything, everything goes against

us. Why was I given talents, without a field in which to exercise them? What profits my study, when the patients turn to white witches, quack remedies, and ignorant pedants? What will come of this marriage, kept concealed? No good. No good has ever come to us from anything we have taken in hand. Whatever we have set our hearts upon, if we have succeeded in securing it, has turned to mockery and misery. We have not a chance—you or I. "Man is born to misery as the sparks that fly upward," said Job. It is not true of all. It is terribly true of some. Some men are born into the world with distorted legs or spines, and some with distorted prospects. With them everything goes perversely. Providence flouts and buffets them through life. Such are we—such am I. I am like a tortured, bullied dog, driven with a whip from corner to corner, lashed from one hiding-place to another, never allowed to lie down and bask in the sun without a cut of the cruel whip across him. We see happiness all about us, but it is not for us; ease and plenty for others, not for us; success for mountebanks and swindlers, not for us, true and sincere. For us, corroding care, disappointments everywhere; thorns, not flowers; bitterness, not honey; shadow, and no light. The light and joy of life is flowing all about us, as the luminous waves to-night, but we cannot grasp and retain any of it. Rose asked me if I had tried, and she said, "Do not wish it—it is not for you."' He sat down by the table, and pulled a needle from his sister's workbox, then rolled up his sleeve of shirt and coat. Loveday did not notice him, she was looking into the fire.

'There are some,' he went on, working with the needle, 'to whom the world is full of blind lanes; it is so to me; nowhere do I find an opening where I may push my way. Everywhere am I brought up short against a dead wall. I have spent everything I possessed on my education and in buying this practice, and it scarce keeps us alive and respectably dressed. What privations we have to endure, you and I know. Is there any chance of getting away? None. Of a lightening in the horizon before us? None. Of our affairs becoming more easy, less of a strain? None. I know very well what will follow this disclosure. You, dear Loveday, you are, in your blind love, leading to the blank wall. Old Gaverock will blaze out in one of his

fury fits, turn Constantine adrift, and give us notice to quit his cottage. Where to find another that will suit I do not know. Never mind. It is all part of the writing of bitter things in the scroll against us.' He stood up and took down his powder-flask, took some of the powder, and rubbed it into his arm.

'What are you doing, Dennis?' asked his sister.

'Look!' laughed the young doctor, bitterly, and he held his arm to her. He had tattooed on it: '*Pas de chance.*'

CHAPTER V.

MOTHER AND SON.

Constantine walked home in very troubled mood. He knew that he must tell his father what he had done, and he dreaded the result. Constantine had more refinement of mind and polish of taste than his elder brother, but he had not his frank and direct character. From childhood he had experienced his father's boisterous imperiousness, which had repelled and offended him. His mother, whose favourite son he was, had made much of him, and by humouring his fancies had endeavoured to compensate for the roughness of his father's treatment. Constantine had no liking for out-of-door pastimes, for hunting, shooting, fishing, sailing, which all involved a good deal of exercise and labour. He liked to saunter in the sun, watching the workmen on the farm, or sit over the fire with a book. His father had no patience with inertness, being himself a man of effervescing energy, and he forced Constantine to accompany him with a gun after game, or with a net after fish, when the young fellow would have preferred to pick out a tune on the piano or count the sails on the horizon. When Constantine was put into a lawyer's office, away from home and its uncongenial atmosphere, he felt the relief, but the relief was only partial. It would have been full but that it was associated with work, and that work was almost as repugnant to his taste as boating and hunting The young man was finely and firmly built, as his brother Gerans, and would have been his match in athletic sports but for that physical indolence which is so fre-

quently associated with superior mental culture. He preferred a book to a hunt, and a morning at the piano to a morning with a gun. In music he was self-taught, and he had made no proficiency, because too lazy to practise. He liked music because it pleased without exacting anything of him. In literature he read nothing that required close attention. He read for amusement—not for profit.

His father's roughness and his mother's favouritism had combined to destroy the moral fibre of his character—to make him selfish, shifty, and insincere. Under different circumstances he would have been other. Circumstances with him, as with Dennis Penhalligan, had spoiled his life.

When Constantine entered the hall of Towan, he found his father by the fire, with a bottle of rum, a jug of hot water, a lemon, sugar, and glasses on the oak table. Gerans was standing and talking to him.

'I have been caught in a wave, and am drenched,' said Constantine. 'Lend me a coat, Gerans; my father tore my bottle-green, and this one is sopped. I have but two here.'

'Come to the hearth,' called Hender Gaverock. 'A souse of salt water seasons a man. Here is a hot fire to dry you from without, and here is hot fire to warm you within.'

'I require a complete change,' said Constantine. 'I am drenched to the marrow of my bones.'

'Being made of sugar, you will melt. Get along with you!' exclaimed the old man. 'Gerans, give him a dry suit; and then, Con, come back to us and join in a bowl of punch to welcome your return.'

Half an hour later the young man returned, reluctantly, but unable to disobey his father. He took his place by the fire.

'Well,' shouted old Gaverock, 'what have you learned at Exeter? Can you indenture, indite, draw a mortgage, and execute a conveyance?'

'I am learning my profession,' answered Constantine.

'And unlearning what you have acquired here—how to ride a horse and steer a boat. Eh?'

'No, father; these things are never unlearnt, any more than the art of swimming.'

'I hope not. How many honest people have you

cheated out of their estates? How many have you squeezed dry as I squeeze this lemon?'

'The profession of a lawyer is as honest as any other,' said the young man.

'May be. All rogues—the parsons, the doctors, the gaugers, the lawyers. All rogues in their several ways. What!' turning to his wife—'no more rum? Only three drops in the bottle, eh? Put the stone jars in the boat to-morrow. I'll get more.'

'Whither are you going, father?' asked Gerans.

'Going to take Con out sealing, to keep his hand in. You can't come, Gerans; you must go to Wadebridge Fair and buy a horse. Con and I will run to Featherstone's and fill the jars.'

'I had rather not go to-morrow, father,' began the second son; but he was cut short by the old man.

'Golly!' he exclaimed. 'Are you come back to play the piano and read poetry? Not so. You are returned to Towan to be tuned up to the proper pitch of manhood. You shall come with me to-morrow, and prove that you have not forgotten the management of a boat. Mother will want oil for the lamps, and Rose has been promised a pelisse of sealskin against the winter. Do you think to win your way to a girl's heart with tum-tum and books? If you do you vastly mistake the sex. I am sixty-five and know them thoroughly. Stand up, Con! Stand up, Gerans! Back against the wall, my lady, out of my path.'

The old man hooked his arm through those of his sons, taking one on each side, and strode with them up and down the hall—he in his great boots, and his long coat buttoned back behind, and with huge strides; Gerans in his riding-boots and breeches and short hunting-coat.

'Ha! ha!' shouted the Squire. 'About of a height, all three, are we not, mother? You won't see such strapping fellows as we this side Bodmin. It is of me they draw their size and muscle and bone, as of me they take their name. There, sit down, boys, and drink. Mother, put your lips to the glass, to Con's prosperity—and may he be the man in heart that he is in figure. Ah, Con! it will be no fault of mine if I do not make as tough an old Cornish bull-dog of you as your father is, your grandfather was, and your brother promises to become.'

The evening was spent in drinking punch and talking. Old Gaverock did more of both than his sons. He belonged to an order of men passing away at the beginning of this century—now completely gone. He was stiffnecked, and not to be turned from a purpose he had resolved on, even though his reason was convinced that it was unwise. Accustomed from youth to have his own way, finding no one to oppose him, he was ungovernable in his self-will Living in a corner of England, away from civilising influences, unreached by the rising tide of culture, among men who drank and gambled, fought, wrestled, smuggled, and were not above reaping a harvest out of a wreck, he had little of the gentler elements of humanity in him.

As he drank, he became more noisy, boastful, and headstrong. To Constantine his conduct was most repugnant. Gerans was accustomed to him, laughed, joked, took his father's sallies good-humouredly, and was shocked at nothing.

At last the old Squire rose, stamped, and said :

'What, Con ! scarce emptied your glass ? Don't you appreciate the taste of smuggled rum punch in Exeter ? Have you unlearned the liking for anything stronger than sour cider ? It is time for bed. To-morrow early be up, and take with you Gerans' gun. We will go after the seals.'

The Squire was not late to go to rest ; however much he drank, however merry he was, he knew his time for turning in between the blankets. He was an early riser. He was up at daybreak in summer, and before daybreak in winter, and therefore could not keep late hours at night.

Soon after he had gone, Constantine sought his room. Gaverock was mistaken in supposing that he had not drunk. He had taken more than was customary with him, to drown the troubles that worried his mind, though not as much as behoved a proper Gaverock. He undressed and threw himself on his bed, and fell asleep, leaving his candle unextinguished.

He had not been long asleep before the door was opened timidly, and his mother's anxious face looked in. She alone in the house was not asleep. She was wont to sit up last, every night, to see that the fires and candles were extinguished. On her way to her room she observed the light

under Constantine's door, and she tapped. As there was no answer, she gently entered. She seated herself at his side, and stroked his disordered hair, then folded her hands in her lap, with her back to the candle, and patiently watched him. Tears were in her faded eyes, but she watched him with her whole soul, with every fibre of her heart, unable to satisfy the weary, hungry spirit of maternal love with the sight of her best-loved son.

'My boy, my dear, dear boy!' she whispered. She had not seen him for a twelvemonth, and his reception at home was not such as to make him desirous of a repetition of visits.

Mrs. Gaverock had led a life of care and pain. Only for a short moment had she known love, in the flowering of the wheat, in the first glow of youth and passion, and then her rough husband had thrust her on one side, that he might follow his favourite pursuits, which occupied his mind and filled his heart. Love is an episode in man's life, it is the epic of woman's soul.

She—gentle, loving, patient—had nothing in common with Hender Gaverock, whose interests were all external to the house. She received from him many a hard word, and much neglect, more intolerable than ill-usage.

Her youth passed without pleasure. Her fresh cheeks faded, unkissed, and her hair grew grey, uncaressed by loving hands. All her pride, all her love, her every hope, were wrapped up in her children, especially in Constantine. All that was sweet, and pure, and beautiful in her humble, womanly soul had flowed together to form one strong stream of motherly love.

With self-devotion, fervour, tears, she had seen her sons grow up under her eyes; she had watched them as the sea-mew watches with fluttering wings and beating heart over her young. By degrees Gerans was drawn from her, led by his father along his way, into his pursuits. Gerans was pliable, and an outdoor life congenial to him. For the Squire he entertained the most profound admiration, and gave him unquestioning obedience. The softer natured, more domestic Constantine was the light of her eyes and the signet on her heart. He was taken from her, and sent to a solicitor in Padstow. Then she saw him only when he returned on Saturday afternoon for the Sunday at home.

Whilst he was in this office her weeks were consumed in longing for his return, and in mingled delight and disappointment when he was at home—delight at noticing his growth, his good looks ; disappointment at finding him less reliant on her, his one and only friend.

After he had spent an apprenticeship at Padstow, he was sent, partly at her instance, to her brother, a solicitor, in Exeter. From that time she saw no more of him till his return that day. Now, quietly, when no one was by to observe her, and Hender was asleep unable to rebuke or ridicule her, she was able undisturbed to sit and watch with every pulsation of her heart the face of the boy she loved.

The candle guttered into the socket and went out. She could see Constantine's face no more. It mattered not, she could watch where he lay, and listen to his breath drawn evenly in sleep. His hand was outside the bedclothes. She timidly took it between her own.

When he had arrived that day he had not shown great eagerness to salute her ; but then his father interposed by calling on him to unharness the horse, and this had disturbed and annoyed him. For how many, many days had she counted on his return, and when he arrived it was to disappoint her ! He had gone to bed without wishing her good-night and kissing her as in olden days. She excused him again—his father had kept him drinking till bedtime, and then had dismissed him fuddled and forgetful of his filial duties.

'Mother !'

With a start she heard him speak. He was awake and looking at her. The night was not dark—a crescent moon was in the sky—and sufficient light flowed in at the window to allow of his distinguishing her, seated as she was between him and the light.

'I am here, Con ! dear Con ! ' she said, and pressed his hand. 'I hope I have not roused you from your sleep.'

'I do not know what awoke me,' he answered. 'Perhaps it was your hand holding mine, perhaps it was disturbing dreams.'

'Con,' she said, 'you went to bed without giving me a good-night and a kiss. Therefore I could not rest.'

'Then, mother, stoop over me, and let me kiss you now,'

he said; and when she bent her head he put his arm round her neck, and drew her wet cheek down on his lips. 'Mother, you have been crying!'

'Yes, Con; crying with happiness to have you home again. You young people have many pleasures and ambitions, but an old woman has only one—the pleasure of seeing her children, the ambition of seeing them happy and prosperous.'

'Not much chance of prosperity for me, the younger son,' said Constantine. 'That is for Gerans. For me—as the paradise to which I must aspire—a pettifogging lawyer's office.'

'Don't say that, Con; it is not so,' said his mother, hurt at the contemptuous allusion to her brother.

'Whether I say it or not, it is true,' he answered.

'You may be very happy and successful if you will,' she said, speaking eagerly and pressing his hand. 'Your father has not been careless of your welfare. On the contrary, he has provided for your future, and that is one reason why you were sent for home at present.'

'How is that?' asked Constantine sceptically. 'I thought father had neither eyes nor thoughts for any but his first-born.'

'You wrong him, Con. He is just; and he has formed a beautiful scheme for your advancement.'

'Tell it me, mother,' asked the young man sitting up in bed.

'You have seen Rose Trewhella?'

'Yes.'

'Is she not pretty? Is she not altogether charming?'

'I don't know. I paid no particular attention to her qualities of face or mind.'

'But you must do so, dear Con. She is not only very charming, sweet as her name implies, but also a bit of living, dancing sunlight; and, what is more to the purpose, worth over four hundred pounds a year. Your father is her guardian and trustee, and he has made up his mind that you are to take her and her money, and so he will provide for you splendidly.'

Mrs. Gaverock, in the delight of her heart at the prospect, clapped her hands on that of her son. He took the opportunity to withdraw his hand.

'This is rank nonsense!' he said.

'It is not nonsense, Con,' she urged; 'it is the best of common sense. What an excellent wife she will make! And your father says that you can sell her property at Kenwyn and Truro and buy Trevithick. By this means your estatewill adjoin Towan, and we shall see you every day. Oh, Con! is not this purely beautiful?'

'Has the young lady been consulted?' asked Constantine.

'Oh no; but she is sure to acquiesce in the arrangement. Why, Con, any girl would be proud to have you.'

'But I may not care for the girl.'

'You must like Rose. She is so pretty, so pleasant Besides, it is your father's desire.'

Constantine threw himself down on the bed angrily.

'I cannot! I will not!'

'But, Con, your father has resolved on it; and what he makes up his mind to must be carried out.'

'I cannot! I will not!'

'Why? For Heaven's sake do not say "I cannot" to him—it would make him furious. Oh, Con, reconsider! Do not stand in your own light.'

'I have already done so,' answered Constantine. 'I have stood in my own light so effectually that I am out in the dark and cold. Curse it! I *can* not take Miss Trewhella and her four hundred, because I am married already; and I *will* not, for the other good reason that bigamy is punishable with transportation. I will tell you no more. Leave me. I am tired and want sleep. The particulars you shall know another time.'

CHAPTER VI.

RED FEATHERSTONE.

Squire Gaverock's boat, the 'Mermaid,' was one of which he was justly proud, as the fastest sailer between Tintagel and Trevose, that is for her size. She was a cutter, decked, and with fixed bowsprit and mast, like a schooner. Hender

Gaverock was as much at home on the deck of a boat as on the back of a horse. The only place where he was not at home was—at home, where he found nothing to do and nothing to interest him except the bottle.

About seventy years ago seals were tolerably numerous on the north-west Cornish coast. There are a good many to be found there still, but their numbers have of late been greatly diminished. Seventy years ago they abounded in the caves, where they reared their young, and in the bays they were frequently encountered—their black heads rising out of the sea, with strangely human eyes in them, rising and falling with the swell of the sea.

Gaverock took with him his boatman, David Tregellas. If he and Constantine were going to shoot seals, one of the party must be at the helm, another at the jib, and one must be ready with the gun for the sport.

'Got the stone jars there, David?'

'Aye, aye, sir! Strapped together for easy carriage.'

'That is right. I'll run the "Mermaid" to Featherstone's Kitchen—Gwen's shop. We have drunk ourselves out of rum.'

'I reckon us had better not go so far as that,' said Tregellas, shaking his head. 'The birds be all flying inwards, and the water was on fire last night.'

'Glad to hear it,' said Gaverock. 'Here is Constantine with his brains full of city fashions, and his nerves as slack as trade in bullocks. Do him good to have a blow, to clear his head and brace his tendons; and if he gets a splash of brine in his face it will wash out the milk and raspberry, and make his face less like a girl's.'

'What is right for you, Squire, is right for me,' answered Tregellas. 'You've more to lose than I.'

'You mind the jib, David; I'll tend the main-sheet and steer. Now then, Con, hold the gun, and keep your eyes open. Take heed of the boom when I say "Luff"; and don't let it knock you overboard as if you were a lout who had never tasted salt water.'

'I reckon us'll see no seals to-day, Squire,' said Tregellas. 'What sends the birds inland sends the seals to security—which proves that humans be bigger fools nor qirds and beasts.'

'If they don't show on the water we'll follow them into their caves,' answered Gaverock angrily.

'You must have a row-boat for doing that,' argued Tregellas.

The Squire growled. He disliked contradiction. He specially resented it when he knew he was in the wrong. He had made up his mind for sport, and sport he would have in spite of wind and weather.

'Wind sou'-sou' west,' he said. 'Con, been to Featherstone's Kitchen before?'

'No, father.'

'You shall see the Kitchen whence we get our supplies of spirits—spirits that pay no duty.'

The day was pleasant. The sun shone, and the sea rolled, but was not rough. The cutter skimmed like a bird. In vain did Constantine and his father look for seals. Not a seal was to be seen. They ran into the little coves, but the creatures were not there, neither basking on the reefs nor floating on the waves.

Nothing can be conceived more magnificent than that coast, with its crags of trap, or contorted slate and gneiss, here and there strangely barred with white spar. In the bays the gulls and kittiwakes were flashing and screaming; and now and then a red-shanked, scarlet-beaked chough went by with a call of warning. The birds were in excitement, shrieking to each other, and answering in equally high-pitched tones. The morning passed wasted in hunting after seals that would not show.

'There they are, in yonder cave,' said old Gaverock, indicating with his chin the torn face of cliff, in which were many fissures and vaults. 'If we had only a row-boat, we could go in, and we should find them far away in the dark, lying on ledges, looking at us, or, if we threatened them, flapping pebbles at us with their fins. Golly! I've been hit afore this, and had my head cut open, as surely as if the creatures had taken aim at me with hands. At times I'm fain to believe the seals are human and have souls. I dare say they have about as much as a woman. I was out sealing—it was a day much like this—when I killed Featherstone. Have you ever heard the tale, Con? Well, I dare be bound you've heard tell something about it, and all wrong. None know the real rights but David Tregellas

and myself. Red Featherstone was a rover as well as a smuggler. If he had been only the latter, it would have given me a sour soul to have killed him, though we were rivals. Featherstone was a proper bad man. He carried off whatever his hands laid hold of. He had a boat, the like of which was not seen then, but the "Mermaid" would be her match now. Golly! I'd like to have the chance of racing Featherstone's cutter! She was built something the same as this. Featherstone had a large vessel, a schooner, and with her he went to France, or Spain, no one knows whither. He came back to these coasts laden with things—stolen mostly; I don't believe he paid for his goods with money. Here and there along the coast he had his kitchens—that is, store places—whither folks might go and where they might buy what they wanted, spirits and wines and tobacco, and silks and laces and china; I can't tell you what things he did not hide there, and I know he did a fine trade. The kitchens were vaults scooped out of the rocks, and cottages were built over them with secret entrances, and secret exits to the water. Very useful those kitchens were, and mighty convenient they are still. We are bound now for one, where I shall fill these jars with rum. But Featherstone no longer plies the trade. It has fallen prodigiously since his time. I spiked him. Luff! mind your head, you fool!'

He altered the course of the 'Mermaid.' 'It is an old story; it happened before you were born or thought of, before I married your mother. Indeed, I doubt if I should have had your mother if Featherstone had not first been put out of the way. The folks call him Red Featherstone, because he was fond of wearing a scarlet waistcoat laced with gold; but over it he wore a long oilskin shiny black coat. In all weathers it was the same, and he looked like a porpoise in his shiny suit buttoned over his red waistcoat. But when he came a-courting he left off the oilskin and showed his waistcoat. He was vastly attached to your mother, and I had a fancy towards her too. Of course I had, or I would not have married her. Well, Featherstone and I could not abide each other, as was natural, for we were rivals for your mother, and by the Lord! he threatened to carry her off in his schooner if she were not given to him, so her father and brothers were armed and watched night

and day when Featherstone's boat was about. One day, just such a day as this—how well I remember it, and so does David yonder! The sun was darting, a beam (bank of cloud) was over the West, lying on the sea. I was out spearing seals. Guns weren't so plenty or so good as now, and nothing like so sure of aim as a spear. I used to take one of the old weapons from the hall, a halbert with a jagged feather-like barb. I was partial to this weapon, because, if the head went in far enough, the seal could not slip away; the barb held it. Well, as I came shooting round that headland yonder, I was close on the Watcher, which is a shelf of rock leaning with the rough broken edge landwards, and sloping towards the sea. It is only covered in a heavy sea. David and I could not see the Watcher till we were close upon it, and then, there I saw Red Featherstone seated on the sloping shelf priming his pistols. He had on his oilskin coat and oilskin leggings and long boots, and shone in the sun like a porpoise. You couldn't see a scrap of red about him. If he had his scarlet waistcoat on, it was buttoned over. But wait! you shall hear.' The old man chuckled. 'I didn't see all his waistcoat that day, but I saw some of it, as you shall hear.'

He paused, wiped his brow with his sleeve, and went on. 'When Featherstone saw me he sprang to his feet and swore, and Tregellas stayed his oars—he was that struck with astonishment he didn't know what to do. Then Featherstone shouted to me that now God or the Devil had brought us face to face, and we would have it out, and settle, that hour, who should have Lydia—that's your mother. He held a pistol in each hand: one was a great brass-mounted horse-pistol, and the other was quite a toy tool, silver mounted. He held the horse-pistol in his right and the other in his left. I had no other arms with me but the old halbert; but I was not afraid. Afraid!' The old man laughed. 'I afraid! I snorted like a walrus, and called to David to pull up to the rock. I stood up in the boat and held the spear above my head ready to cast; but Featherstone was beforehand with me, and he fired the horse-pistol. He missed, for the boat was rocking, but the bullet whizzed past my head, and before ever he could discharge the second at me I flung the spear, and it went through the air straight as a cormorant after a fish, and

struck him in the chest and went right through. I saw the end poking out behind, thrusting out his oilskin. That was a grand fling, that was, and I flung with such force that I levered the boat away and she shot back under my feet and brought me down. That was well for me, as at the same moment the second pistol went off—and they say Featherstone was a better aim with his left hand than with his right. When I picked myself up, I saw Featherstone wrenching at the shaft of spear to lug it out of him, but he could not, for, as I told you, it was barbed ; then it was that I saw some of the red waistcoat, for as he pulled at the spear he pulled the frayed, ragged edges of the red cloth out through the hole in the oilskin where the spear had entered. He could do nothing with it, and he grasped his silver-mounted pistol again, and tried to load it and prime it ; but it was all no use—down he fell, and as he fell he threatened me with his little pistol, but couldn't hurt me, it was unloaded. Just then a black boat shot out from the bay : Featherstone's men were in it. They had been to the Kitchen with stores, and they heard the shot and hurried to their oars, and came after me. David and I made off then as best we might. Well, I was somewhat curdled in mind after that, I allow ; but it was a fair fight. Nay, it was fair on my side and unfair on his, for a halbert was no match for two pistols. Red Featherstone had been outlawed for his malpractices, so no harm could come to me for having spiked him.'

'What countryman was he?' asked Constantine.

'Featherstone? He was of these parts, and yet he was not. That is to say, his family lived somewhere up the coast just over the border in Devon. The family is respectable enough ; and I reckon Red Featherstone took to roving more for sport than for what it brought him. He was a wild, wicked, restless spirit. I don't fancy the taste continued in the family. I've heard nothing of them ever since. Indeed, I do not know if the race still exists.'

'Was no inquiry made after his death?'

'No,' answered old Gaverock. 'He had been outlawed for his misdeeds. I will say that for Featherstone, he never stole anything from the people on this coast ; but he was not so particular elsewhere, and I've heard he committed all sorts of depredations on the coasts of Ireland and Wales, and South Devon and Dorset, besides what he

did in France. No, nothing was ever done about his death. The news got all over the country that I had spiked him, and some one said it was a good job and others did not think so. And some again said that the last of Featherstone had not been seen.'

'If the man was dead,' said Constantine, 'of course the last of him had been seen.'

'Luff! Look out for your head. I don't know but that I'll tell you the reason why I say this. About a year after I had killed Featherstone, I was out on a dark night, and the summer lightning was flashing in the sky. Well, I had my eye on the lighthouse of Trevose. The light was steady enough, but what was queer to me was that every now and then something dark came between me and it, and when it did I heard a click and saw some sparks. I couldn't make it out at all till a flash came out of the West, and, then, for an instant, I saw a black boat shoot past me, and in it stood Featherstone with the pistol in his left hand, and he clicked the trigger, and the flint flashed sparks, but the pistol would not go off. Ever since then I hear constantly the click of the pistol and see the sparks fly out, but I laugh at Featherstone. He can do nothing to me. The pistol must be in mortal hands to be loaded and primed to do me or mine any hurt. Then, again, one day I was in my boat after seals. Tregellas wasn't with me, I was alone, and I rowed into one of the caves near the Watcher. I got a long way in, but the seals were not there; at last I turned to come back, and as I did so, I saw a dark figure in the mouth of the cave, dressed in an oilskin long coat and high boots, standing, I fancied, on a rock that stood out of the water, and yet I knew there was no rock there, and he turned about, and I saw something like a hump on the back. I had a lantern in the bottom of the boat and I held it up, and then I had a good look forward, and I saw a pair of flashing eyes and white teeth. The shining sea was behind him, and he seemed to go up and down on the waves that rolled in, so then I knew he did not stand on a rock. He was busy with his pistol and snapped it, and the sparks flew out. Then I laughed so loud that the cave rang with the roar of my voice, and I cried, "No good! no good, Featherstone! you can't hurt me till mortal hand has hold of that pistol." I've not seen him since.'

'But how did you get out of the seal cave, father?

'I rowed right forward and right through him.'

'How do you mean?'

'I was not afraid. I dipped my oars and went towards the entrance, and I looked over my shoulder and saw him still there, and I struck where he stood with the prow, and then I saw sparks flying all about me; and, what was most curious of all, a spotted dog all at once appeared, and ran from the bows to the stern past me and leaped into the water again, and I saw it no more.'

'Dog! What dog can that have been?'

'Featherstone's dog. He always had such a dog. When I spiked him, the dog stood on the Watcher barking at me. He kept barking as I rowed away. Now look out, Con! Mind yourself! There is the Watcher. That was the last I saw of Featherstone—last but once, and that was in a dream the same night. I reckon I was a bit flurried and fanciful with what had happened, and I thought at night I saw Featherstone standing by my bedside and leaning over me. I saw the red threads of the waistcoat sticking out through the oilcloth coat where the staff of the spear had made a hole, and there ran out, drop by drop, some blood. Tick, tick, tick!—I heard my watch go—then a drop. Tick, tick, tick!—then another drop. Featherstone's eyes seemed to glare into mine and through my head, and he said "You I cannot, but yours." Then tick, tick, tick!—another drop—and he had vanished. Now, the curious thing is that when I woke in the morning, I saw three—just three drops of blood on my sheet: so he had been with me just nine seconds. Since then I have not been threatened by him. What he meant when he said "Not you, but yours," is more than I can make out. However, I'm glad I'm rid of him. I know very well he could do me no harm. But he was a nuisance—yes, he was a nuisance.'

The old man paused a moment, then laughed and said:

'After all I do not care. Let him come again if he will. Let him try his worst. He can do nothing. Keep a good heart, and renounce the devil and all his works, and no Featherstone can hurt me nor mine. Look at the Watcher! Here we are, Con, running into the bay where many a keg has been unshipped for Featherstone's Kitchen.'

The little vessel had her prow turned into a small bay surrounded by sand-hills, and with a good beach in the lap. Here the rocks were of yellow clay-slate in thin layers: very friable and of inferior height. The 'Mermaid' ran ashore, and Gaverock and his son leaped out on the sand.

'Bide with her, Tregellas!' shouted the old Squire; then turning to his son, he said, 'Con, where are the stone jars? Sling them over your shoulders and carry them after me to the Kitchen.'

'Don't y' be away long, now, maister,' said David Tregellas. 'Cast your eye to wind'ard; there's a gale in thicky (yonder) black beam, and us'll have to tack terrible to get home.'

'I see as well as you that wind is coming,' answered Gaverock. 'With bread and cheese and two jars of rum we shan't suffer even if we reach home late and with wet skins. I like the smell of a gale. Follow me, Con!'

Then the old man strode up the shore, and in a few minutes reached a miserable low cottage that cowered under a sand-hill thickly overgrown with coarse grass. A few tamarisks, with their pale pink flowers now blooming, grew beside the cottage on a wall that held back the sand from overflowing and burying the entrance.

The cottage was one story high, thatched with reed, built of the yellow stone dug out of the rock which the sand covered. It had a single window—very small—and a low door. Outside the door, on a bench, knitting a stocking, sat a woman with tanned face and coarse grey hair that blew about her head. She looked up as Gaverock approached and nodded.

'We have come for a supply, Gwen,' said the old man.

'You'm come right enough, Squire,' answered she, 'but you'm none going home 'zacklie as you came.' Then she pointed with one of her knitting-pins at the sky.

'Well, Gwen, I don't object to a capful of wind and the backs of the white horses.'

'Better return by land, Squire. The white horses are going mad to-night, and may kick you out of your saddle.'

'By land! Not I, Gwen, when I have the "Mermaid" to carry me. Be quick, fill me the jars.'

She took the stone bottles without another word and went indoors. She was absent for some time. Gaverock

stood and looked at the sea. The day was rapidly changing. The wind sobbed among the sea grass, and tossed the tamarisks as if trying to tear them up. It carried the sand in little puffs into Gaverock's face. A haze had overspread the sky, and the sun was shorn of its brightness. Rays of vapour struck across the vault of heaven, radiating from the west, straight as sun rays, but dark ; a mass of white curd-like cloud was drifting below the upper canopy. The sea on the horizon was like indigo, near land it was the colour of olive.

'There is no time to be lost. We shall have a rough passage back to Towan,' said the old man.

'Leave the "Mermaid" here,' advised the woman, coming out with the bottles. 'Stay the night in this place. There be plenty of room, though the house don't look to have accommodation ; and when the storm be overpast, go home in the morning. Or, if you prefer, go back by land.'

'No, no,' answered Gaverock. 'I said I'd be home in the "Mermaid" ; and as I came so I return, and that—to-night.'

'Ah, Squire,' said the woman, 'you always was as unturnable as a rusty jack.'

'Take up the rum, Con !' ordered the old man.

'Here is the money for you, Gwen.'

Then he and his son went back to the boat, the latter laden with the jars of rum.

'I was not born to be drowned,' said Hender Gaverock as he slung himself on board, in reply to a question of Tregellas whether he would risk running into the storm. 'Con, take charge of the bottles ; don't let them be washed overboard. Mind, as soon as we catch the gale we shall have to reef. We must keep up some sail, as we have to tack to get home, but we shall have to reef pretty short if the wind be violent.'

'We shan't pass the Watcher without reefing,' said David.

'You tend the jib,' said old Gaverock. He looked up again at the sky. The sun was behind the vapour, that was like the garment of Deianira, through the rents of which fire and venom were spurting. He untied his red kerchief from his throat, and fastened it over his rough

shock of hair. That was the Squire's confession that he recognised the gravity of the storm he was about to face.

'David,' said he, 'we shall have a dirty night.'

'Dirt, sir, ain't the word for it. Say "offal" (awful).'

'David, if the wind shifts a point north, we shall do. We shall make a quick run after all, and be back at Towan to-night.'

'The night is falling already,' said Constantine.

'You mistake cloud for night, boy,' shouted the Squire.

'We had better not risk it,' urged the young man.

'To which I say Amen,' said Tregellas.

'What! afraid of a wetting as of a spill?' laughed Gaverock; and the 'Mermaid' shot out, as David, who had shoved her off, leaped on board and went forward.

Hender Gaverock had no fear. He was constitutionally incapable of fear; always in a fume with excess of energy, ever sanguine, delighting in peril, as hardy as any pilot, he despised the caution of Tregellas and the fear of Constantine. He knew his boat and could manage her as he could manage his horse. She obeyed every turn of his wrist with docility. Her timbers were sound. He knew what he had to do. He must tack to windward into the eye of the gale for a sufficient distance, and then reach away to Sandymouth, past Cardue. In Sandymouth was his harbour.

So long as he could keep up sufficient canvas there was no danger, but the gale, if it greatly increased, would not allow him to carry much sail. He must, moreover, beat outward the proper distance, or he would be swept in on cliffs where his boat would go to pieces like matchwood.

As the 'Mermaid' leaped into the open sea beyond the Watcher, which was now enveloped in boiling foam, the wind came down on her, together with a heavy sea. A shadow like night—or like a presentiment of great disaster—fell over the boat.

'Reef away!' shouted Gaverock. 'David!'

'Aye, aye, sir.'

'What boat is that to starboard? Can you make her out?'

After a pause, Tregellas replied, 'Don't know her at

all, maister. Her looks a'most like the living black shadow of the "Mermaid."'

'By Heaven!' shouted Gaverock, almost springing to his feet, but not relaxing his grasp on the tiller, 'I'm damned if that be not Red Featherstone's boat! I know her cut. I've not clapt eyes on her these thirty years, but I know her again. What has brought her out to-night? I said I'd be glad to race the "Mermaid" against her, and though she be the devil's own boat, and sail in the devil's own weather—golly! I'll race her!'[1]

CHAPTER VII.

A RACE FOR LIFE.

'Hold the sheet, Con,' ordered Hender Gaverock, 'and throw yourself to wind'ard as ballast. Whatever you do, but one turn round the cleet. Many a score of boats have been lost by a double turn.'

The wind rose to a hurricane, the waves piled themselves up, and their foaming crests broke against each other. The day was declining, but the dense clouds made it dark before its time. All colour was gone out of the sea.

Now the little 'Mermaid' proved how good a vessel she was; she skimmed the waves like a seabird, she danced on their crests like the mermaid that she was. A grim smile lighted the face of old Gaverock. He was proud of his boat, and happy to be able to prove her powers. She was scantily provided with ballast for such a gale—only with Constantine, laden with the stone jars.

'Have the bottles with you, lad. Take them over from side to side,' said his father. 'We must keep on all sail we can.'

For some time he saw no more of the mysterious boat, but as he tacked he again obtained a glimpse of her; she also, like the 'Mermaid,' was standing out to sea. The

[1] I have worked into this and the following chapter a tradition of the North Cornish coast akin to that of the Flying Dutchman, which is found in various forms along the coast from Land's End to Orkney and, indeed, in Faroe, Norway and Denmark.

little cutter leaned over with the force of the wind, the water rushed up before her bows and at times swept her deck.

For a moment the sunlight flared out a parting ray from the west, and, as the 'Mermaid' swung up a great billow, the three men saw, to port, the strange boat, as if made of red-hot metal, glowing, glaring, the sail a sheet of flame, the men on board as men of fire.

This was only for a moment. Then the black cloud descended on the sea, and night fell; but still for a while in the west a bloody streak marked the division between sea and sky. Rain began to fall heavily, driving before the wind, drops that struck as hard as hail; it fell so thick that it cut off all sight of the land and of the horizon.

The sea rose higher. The gale lashed at the sea, like a savage groom lashing a horse into a frenzy of fear and fury. The wind shrieked in the rigging, the water hissed and gulped about the boat, the whole air was full of roar, in which, now and again, came the thunder and crash of a plunging billow distinct from the general noise. Already had they been swept by two or three seas, and were drenched to the skin. The water foamed over old Tregellas, who sat forward, and, pouring over the deck, rushed out behind over the Squire. The other boat was near them—so near that they could have hailed one another had they been so minded. Another reef ought to have been taken in, but Gaverock did not like to confess himself beaten in a race—which was a race for life.

Presently, however, when a furious blast sent them over so that the water wet half the sail, he was constrained to take in the second reef, and then, next time he caught sight of the phantom boat, he saw that those on board her had done the same.

'Rum, Con! rum!' shouted Gaverock, and passed the tin cup to his son, who removed the cork from one of the jars, poured out with shaking hand, and passed a jorum to his father, then drank himself, and finally handed the can to Tregellas. The spirit was needed; the three men were numb with cold, and wet to the bone.

When the rushing rain held up, the light on Trevose Head was visible; but Gaverock saw that it was now impossible for him to make Sandymouth that night. The

wind was on shore and he must run out to sea, and keep well out till break of day. This could only be done by constant tacking. He did not tell Constantine or David. There was no need for him to do so ; both knew it as well as he. Unless he could work out to open sea, the wind would carry him ashore between the horns of Hartland and Trevose. If he could manage to run under Lundy, he could lie there all night, ready for return next day. Fortunately the gale was not from the north-west, nor was it due west, but with a point or two to the south-west.

The phosphorescent light on the black billows seemed to the Squire to break into lambent flame about the mysterious boat that shot by out of darkness and into darkness again at intervals. By this light he thought he could distinguish the men on board, with their sou'-westers on their heads ; but as they were all to windward, and the boat heeled over steeply, he could see no faces. Their backs were towards him, but he fancied that he saw the man at the helm with a spot of red glimmering through his dark coat and drops of fire falling from it. That may have been fancy only. In the uncertain light, with the irregular motion of the boats, with glimpses caught casually between boiling seas, in the excited, strained condition of his mind, Gaverock was liable to be deceived.

Not for a moment did the old man's heart fail him. His spirits rose to the occasion. He had expressed a wish to race Featherstone's cutter. Featherstone had taken him at his word ; the phantom ship was there, come at his challenge, at one moment fiery, as if the dead man and his boat had sprung to the challenge from the flames of Tartarus, black for the most part, as though drawn from the blackest abyss of hell.

Presently he saw a mighty wall of water, as of ink, rolling on, with the blear light of the squally western sky behind it, showing its ragged tossing, threatening crown, sharply cut against the light. Gaverock prepared to meet it, with firm grasp of the helm and set teeth. For a moment it seemed as though the 'Mermaid' were about to cleave it—only for a moment, and then she swung up, all her planks straining, as making a desperate effort ; then a rush of whirling foam swept the deck and streamed out of the lee scuppers, as the boat lay over almost on her side.

For a moment she staggered, as though hesitating what to do next, righted herself, and then went headlong down into the sea-trough, as though diving like a cormorant after a fish ; and the walls of black water stood about her, enclosing her as the waves of the Red Sea above the chariots of Pharaoh.

Whilst this happened, Gaverock fancied he heard a shout from the phantom boat, which he could not see, hidden behind the liquid mounds. Was it a cry of mockery, or was it a threat? He waited till the 'Mermaid' had mounted a roller, and then he replied with a roar of defiance.

It was no longer possible to carry so much sail, and he reefed again—but with reluctance. The fury of the storm seemed to grow. He dared not reef further, lest he should lose all command over the boat.

The spray cut and cross-cut the old Squire's face, as though he were being lashed with a horse-whip. The water poured off his shaggy eyebrows, blinding him. He dared not let go his hold of the tiller even with one hand to wipe his face, and he bent his head, and smeared the brine and rain away on his sleeve.

The rum was called for, and passed frequently. Constantine suffered more than his father. His hands were numb and shook with cold. He was less accustomed to exposure than Hender Gaverock and David Tregellas. For a twelvemonth, at least, he had not been to sea. He was angry and bitter at heart with his father for exposing him to discomfort and danger. He firmly resolved never to go out with the old man again. It would be best for him to keep away altogether from home, where he was tripped up, mocked, thrust into peril of his life by the inconsiderate, self-willed old man. Now he was afraid of losing the jars of spirits ; afraid of a wave washing them away. Therefore he took off his kerchief and tied the handles together with it. They were already bound together with a piece of cord ; that cord he passed behind his back, and the kerchief by this means crossed his breast, holding a jar in place under each arm. Thus, when he passed from port to starboard he carried them without inconvenience. That was his first idea in thus attaching them about him, but his second was

that they might form a protection for himself in the event of his being washed overboard or of the vessel foundering.

Featherstone's boat—or that which Gaverock took for it—had been unseen for some while. All at once it shot by. Then the old Squire thought he could distinguish the faces of the men on board, lit by the upward flare of the phosphorescent foam. They were white as the faces of the dead. Not a word was spoken as they went by, though the wind lulled for a minute.

The lull was but for a minute. A little way ahead through the darkness loomed on them a mountain of water, with a curling, hoary, spluttering fringe on its head. Gaverock steered direct at the billow, and the sail was eased as much as possible to help the little 'Mermaid' over the watery heap. The wave came on as if on wheels, rushed down on them, shivering into specks of foam in all parts, on its side, as sparks blink out here and there in tinder; with a roar and a blow, it engulfed the vessel and her crew. For a moment the 'Mermaid' lay on her lee side, as about to heel over, then gathered herself together and righted once more. Gaverock heard a cry from the water. Tregellas was overboard.

'Goodbye to you, David!' cried the old Squire, and said no more. Help was not to be thought of. Then he imagined that he heard a loud triumphant shout come to him over the water. He could not see Featherstone's boat, but the sound came—or he fancied it came—from the quarter where she must be. Constantine was now alone in the vessel with his father. They had to manage her between them. The old man could not leave the tiller. He held it with iron hand, though numbed with the cold, and with the fingers stiff, without feeling, and contracted. Soon after, again he caught a glimpse, but only a glimpse, of the phantom boat. The clouds had parted momentarily before the crescent moon, and a ray had touched this mysterious vessel. For an instant, an instant only, it shone out against the night and storm, ghost-like, as if cut out of white paper and stuck against the soot-black background. Gaverock's pulses smote his ribs like hammers. He was very angry. Featherstone, the Rover, had revisited the world and the scene of his exploits, to have his revenge on the race that had compassed his murder. He was

following the 'Mermaid,' to watch and track to death the man and the son of the man who had killed him. Gaverock looked about for, and with his hand groped after Constantine's gun. A foolish desire for revenge came over him. He would have liked, next time the strange boat appeared, to discharge the gun at the helmsman. But he abandoned the idea almost as soon as it was formed. He dare not desert the tiller, and the gun was doubtless rendered useless by the water.

As the night wore on, Gaverock lost all sense of time. Hour after hour had passed, but the night became no darker; the storm, if it did not abate, grew no worse. Sometimes the clouds aloft were torn apart, and the Squire could look up at the stars and see tattered fragments of vapour being whirled across the gap, which then closed again. At times driving storms of rain came on, and when rain did not fall the air was full of spondrift.

Gaverock guessed pretty well where he was, and he altered somewhat the course of his boat. He was now, according to his reckoning, driving towards the Channel. He could see Lundy light at intervals, far away to leeward, but he had lost sight of that on Trevose Head.

Gaverock's heart did not fail him, but he was less confident than he had been of reaching home alive. He took the peril without much concern; it was what must be expected by those who went out boating in dirty weather. If he were drowned, well—it could not be helped. All must die. But he was vexed that he had not been able to keep his word, and run home to Towan in spite of the gale. Strange to say, the feeling that prevailed in him, and nerved him to battle with the tempest, was rage against Featherstone. He had dared Featherstone to race him, and Featherstone he saw would beat him, and be able to exult over the wreck of the 'Mermaid.' Not a thought did he give to his wife, to Gerans, to Rose; his one absorbing consideration was—how to disappoint Featherstone; his one consuming ambition was—to come off with life and with an unwrecked boat, not for his own sake, but to defeat and disappoint Featherstone.

Between three and four in the morning, as the dawn was beginning to lighten, Gaverock saw again a mountain of foam before him, so white, so broken, that he feared he

was fallen among the breakers ; next moment he recognised his mistake. No rocks were there, no sandbank. What he saw was a mountain of seething foam, the clash and churn of angry waves that had beaten against each other in a cross sea, and had resolved themselves into a heap of milky brine, that worked and hissed throughout its substance and over its face. The 'Mermaid' went in, and for a moment or two Gaverock and his son were holding their breath, submerged in sea-water. When the 'Mermaid' came out, she lay keel uppermost, and the old man and Constantine were clinging to her tackling and floating in the sea. Gaverock was prepared for this. He had not lost his presence of mind. He hacked through the shrouds on the side, so as to allow the mast to float, instead of working underneath her. Then, using great exertion, he scrambled upon the keel, and Constantine did the same.

There they sat, in cold and wet, gripping the bottom of the boat with hands and knees, covered every few minutes with the waves.

Constantine found that his powers were failing. He could hold on but very little longer. There was only just sufficient light for them to know that the night was changing to day. Constantine pulled the corks out of the jars, one after the other, and poured forth their contents, then he corked them tightly again. Would it not be well for him to pass one of the jars to his father? To do that, he must unknot both his kerchief and the cord, and his hands were too numb for this. Besides, it was doubtful whether a single jar would suffice to float a man. He looked at his father. The old man had strength and endurance in him yet, and Constantine had neither. Besides, the father had run him into this great peril, not he the father. In common justice, therefore, the risk should fall heaviest on the old man.

'Father!' he called, 'I can hold on no longer.'

'Then let go. I'll give your respects to mother.'

At that moment a great roller swept over both. As the boat came out, Gaverock saw the strange vessel, with the dark figures in it, shoot by. Then he looked along the keel—Constantine was gone.

The old man's heart beat, not with sorrow for his son, nor with fear for himself, but with anger that Featherstone

should have witnessed, and be exulting over, the loss of his servant and his son.

'I will not drown. Golly! I'll spoil his sport yet,' shouted Gaverock; and he took the great knife wherewith he had cut through the cordage, and with it he worked holes between the wood and the lead of the keel, into which he could fit his fingers, dead and frozen though they were, but still with the cling in them, set as claws.

Gaverock could no longer sit up; he lay his length on the keel, with his red face on one side, and the crimson kerchief dripping, hanging loose round his neck—it had been washed off his head—draggling behind him.

The day was lightening. Gulls laughed and fluttered over the wreck, then plunged and shook their wings about the clinging man, regardless of him, knowing his inability to injure them. The wind was certainly abating, but the waves still tumbled, and bounded, and shook themselves into froth, and filled his ears with a sound as of a roar out of infinite space, a roar that would never end, a roar inarticulate and all-pervading. And a sense came over him of cold and weariness—of cold that no heat could ever thaw, but which was so cold as to chill and put out all fire—of weariness that would never grow less, and that no rest would ever refresh, but which also would continue the same, never becoming more acute, a dead weariness, with a thread of eternity penetrating through it. But withal, in spite of cold and weariness and noise, his will never failed—that remained unflagging, nervous, iron. Overhead, pink flashes appeared among the clouds, like the flowers of tamarisks scattered about the sky. His eyes saw neither the colour nor the light. He had no power to observe anything, he had no thought for anything, no wish but one. 'Featherstone! Featherstone! I'm not done yet, and I won't give way.'

Then indistinctly, out of another world, he heard voices, then he became conscious of something not cold and watery touching him. Gradually he came out of his far-off realm of cold and weariness and numbness to the meeting-place of a world of warmth and action and life. He heard human voices, he felt himself caught by hands. But he clung the more fiercely, tenaciously, to the keel. For a

moment his senses went, then came again, brought back by the force of his dominant will.

The 'Mermaid' was washed ashore in Bude Haven, and he was in the arms of living men.

He looked round, and saw sand-hills. He tried to cry out triumphantly, 'Featherstone! not beaten!' but his voice and his consciousness failed him.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SHADOW OF DEATH.

On the third day after his interview with Constantine in the Iron Gate, Dennis Penhalligan walked up the coomb and over the hill to Towan. He had heard that Gaverock and his younger son had gone to sea in the 'Mermaid' on the morning of the storm and had not returned. His sister was white, red-eyed, and trembling with excitement and fear. She entreated him to get the last news for her, and relieve her alarm or confirm her worst anticipations.

On reaching Towan he saw a shaggy horse in broken harness patched with rope and string attached to a gig with torn splashboard, and wheels without paint on the tires and paintless half way up the spokes, standing before the door, with a rough boy, almost as wild as the horse, and in clothes as torn and rudely mended as the harness, seated in the gig, flicking the horse with the whip for diversion, without allowing him to leave the door.

Dennis went by into the hall. There he saw Gerans, who held out his hand to him without speaking.

The doctor heard a sound from the adjoining parlour like the wailing of the wind, then words followed, which he could not hear, though he knew the voice to be that of Rose, and then again a fresh burst of wails. Gerans held his face averted.

'Look at that, Dennis,' he said, pointing to a letter on the table. 'Poor Con is lost.'

Dennis took up the letter and read it. It was in the scrawling hand of the Squire :—

'Gerans,—I've sent a boy with a trap for you from

Bude; he is to change horses at Camelford. You are to come back with him, and bring along with you two fresh jars, empty, for rum. The others are lost. I'll fill them on my way home. Very sorry to say that Tregellas and Con were drowned, poor fellows, but the "Mermaid" is all right—came ashore into Bude Haven, keel up, and I astride thereon; so the "Mermaid" was no derelict, and, I'm thankful to add, no wreck neither. Very little wants doing to her, and you and I will bring her back to Sandymouth. By the time you are here I reckon she'll be ready for sea again. So am I. Sorry, terribly sorry, about Con. Tell your mother not to be a fool, and cheer up.'

Dennis laid the letter on the table.

'This is all: you know no more?'

'Nothing but what the boy has told us. My father came into Bude Harbour yesterday morning on the "Mermaid" clinging to the keel, unconscious, or nearly so, and poor Con——' Gerans' voice broke down, and he went to the window and leaned his elbows on it, looking out, and putting his hand to his eyes, and pretended that something was tickling them.

'Poor Con,' he said, after a while, 'was washed off far out to sea. He told father he could hold on no longer—he was overcome with cold and exhaustion. Tregellas had been carried off the deck earlier. My mother!—my poor mother!'

Dennis respected his sorrow, and was silent for some time. At last he said, in a low tone:

'I am very grieved for your mother and you—very. You have my warmest sympathy. You are going to Bude now, I suppose?'

Gerans nodded.

'I want to know one thing before you leave. Did your brother say anything particular to you or your father before starting on this disastrous expedition?'

'Say anything! What do you mean? He said "Goodbye"—nothing more. He had no idea that the cruise would be dangerous.'

'I do not mean that—I mean about Loveday.'

'About Loveday!' repeated Gerans with unfeigned surprise. 'No; what had he to say?'

'I must tell you now, Gerans. If this had not hap-

pened, you would have heard it from his own lips before to-day. I had his promise to reveal it.'

Young Gaverock turned and looked at him with a puzzled expression.

'It can be nothing of consequence, now, Dennis,' he said. 'You can tell me some other time. I must be off to Bude to meet my father.'

'No, Gerans. I should wish you to know all at once, before you see him. You are regretting the loss of a brother—I of a brother-in-law.'

The young Squire stared stupidly in Dennis's face. He could not take in the meaning of his words.

'Do you not understand me?' said the surgeon. 'Constantine had married my sister.'

'Nonsense!' Gerans blurted forth. 'You are dreaming.'

'It is true. When Loveday was in Exeter, last spring, Constantine wrongly persuaded her, and she weakly allowed herself to be persuaded. They were married, but I did not know it till three days ago.'

'Impossible! My father was not asked.'

'No; your father was not consulted, nor was I. The thing was done secretly. Your brother acted in a most dishonourable——'

'He is dead,' said Gerans, holding up his hand.

'True; but when I think of this my blood boils. No one's consent was asked. They were married, and parted. She returned to me; he remained at Exeter. Months passed, and the secret did not leak out, though I suspected something was being kept from me. I read it in Loveday's face. I saw it lurking in her once so honest eyes. I taxed her with concealment, but she would confess nothing till the return of Constantine. Then all came out.'

'When?'

'When! Why, in Porth-Ierne.'

Gerans said no more. He looked down, greatly troubled.

'Now,' Penhalligan went on, 'I ask whether Constantine had told your father before he started on this unhappy sail?'

'I am sure he did not. My father would have been so disconcerted, he would have spoken about it to every one. My father gives utterance before all the world to whatever passes through his mind.'

'You will ascertain, when you see the Squire, whether he was told this on the cruise?'

'I do not think Con would tell him then, with old Tregellas in the boat.'

'Then you must tell him as you return with him.'

Gerans shook his head. 'Don't force me to do that—at least, not now, with this trouble on us. Father will launch out in angry words against—against poor Con; and I cannot bear that—not now, at least. He never cared for Con as did my mother and I. Con was my brother, with only a year between us, and we grew up together; we were daily companions and the best of friends. My father never understood Con's superiority—he had far more brains than I have. No, Dennis; let this lie quiet for a few days. It would heighten my mother's grief.'

'It must be known speedily.'

'Why so?'

'Because I will not have it remain hid.'

'What good will it do?'

'It must come out,' said Dennis firmly.

Gerans sighed, and held out his hand to him. 'Well, old fellow, you think of a sister—I of a brother. Of course you are right, but give us time.'

Penhalligan saw Gerans drive off, and then he stood hesitating. Should he go directly home and tell his sister what he had heard, or should he first try to see and speak to Rose? The spell on him was too strong for him to be able to break away. Being at Towan, he must have a glimpse of her face. He knew that she could not be his, because the happiness would be too great for such as he, born under a fatal star, without a chance; yet he could not muster up the moral courage to keep away from her. He craved to see her, as an opium-eater craves for the drug; but the sight of her, instead of soothing, tortured him. He lingered at the door, with one foot on the step, his eyes on the ground. He had a walking-stick in his hand, and he scratched signs with the ferrule in the earth. 'Why should I see her?' he asked. 'The sight of her will make me miserable. But I shall be miserable if I do not see her. Why can I not tear myself away from this place and go to the other end of England? I cannot. My sister is dependent on me. All I had is sunk here and here I

must sink also.' He raised his dark eyes, full of threatening light, towards heaven, and muttered, 'Thou writest bitter things against me.'

Then, at the door, appeared Rose, looking pale and frightened, the laughter and light washed from her eyes, but beautiful, more beautiful than ever, in her pallor.

'Mr. Penhalligan,' she said, 'come, come quickly, and see Mrs. Gaverock.'

In her eagerness she caught him by the arm, and drew him after her through the hall into the little parlour beyond, that opened out of it—the one room that had a window with a southern aspect. Mrs. Gaverock was there, crouched on the floor against the window-frame, her grey hair dishevelled and falling down her back. She put her hand over her face and forehead and through her hair with a curious mechanical motion, and with the other hand pointed to the window-frame, on which were little scratches and dates.

'Con!' said the old woman, 'little Con! so high. Four years old to-day. Little Con! so high, five years old to-day!' and she pointed to another notch or scratch. 'My Con, my pretty boy, my pet, my darling, so high, six years old—that is—how long ago?' She put her trembling left hand to her brow and shook her head, and brushed her forehead, and, unable to solve the question, went on: 'What a brave, pretty fellow, so tall for eight—no—where was I? I must begin again, with the first score that was drawn to-day when he is three. Con! little Con! four years, or three years?' She put her hand to her head. 'Help me! which is it? Little Con, pretty boy, four years old to-day, and so high.' She turned round, pointing, and looked at Dennis. Her eyes were dazed.

'Miss Trewhella,' said the young doctor, 'go at once for assistance. You must take Mrs. Gaverock to bed and she must be bled.' That was the panacea for all ills at the time of which we write. 'Miss Rose, I will go home immediately, and return with my instruments and a composing draught. The shock has been too much for head and heart.'

When he had seen the broken-minded and broken-hearted mother taken to her room, Dennis hastened home.

At his garden gate, before he reached the house, he saw

the figure of his sister standing looking up the path expectantly.

She was able to read nothing in his face as he came up; she took his arm, and looked questioningly into his dark lowering eyes.

'Pas de chance,' he said, 'for us and for all with whom we are brought in contact, evil fortune hangs over us still, and blasts us. Mrs. Gaverock is ill; I must return at once to Towan and bleed her.'

Loveday's lips quivered and her eyes became dim. She feared the worst. Had her brother good news he would not have tantalised her. He would have communicated it at once.

'Mrs. Gaverock has had bad news, and it has crushed her, mentally and physically. I doubt if she will rally from it. Her heart was set on one object, and—of course,' he said these words with concentrated bitterness, 'that object is taken from her. Loveday, there is but one lesson life teaches, care for no person and nothing. Be without a noble hope, without a great ambition—be as a beast, and rollick through life, and then life opens and laughs in response. Demand of it anything but what is common and base and you curse yourself with a career of misery.'

Loveday's quivering hand was in his, her swimming eyes on his.

'Sister,' he said, 'I have been told that the vulgar oyster when born has got eyes, and a faculty of seeing through them the world, and light and colour and beauty. But the silt gets in and frets them away, and little by little it loses its eyes, and light and colour and beauty are no more for it, only a base, mud-life under water. The eyes were only given it that they might be taken away, and the remembrance of light be to it a lifelong repining. Every faculty we have is given us as a vehicle for suffering. Let us love, desire, cling to anything, and that thing is taken from us! There; go to your room and cry. The blight is on you. Constantine is dead.'

But she did not go. She grasped his hand tighter, and said, 'I have steeled my heart to hear this, Dennis. I acted very wrongly and Constantine very foolishly. That is over. Let the past be past. Let the whole secret remain

a secret. Now it need be known to none but ourselves. I can weep for him in my own chamber; I do not care that the world should know why.'

CHAPTER IX.

THE UNSPOKEN TONGUE.

Dennis Penhalligan and Rose Trewhella were standing together in the hall by the window. The light struck in on his dark face, and Rose could not fail to notice how handsome it was. He had asked her to follow him downstairs from the sick-room of Mrs. Gaverock. In spite of her playful and flippant manner with him, Rose stood in awe of the young surgeon. To one thoughtless, without a trouble, full of exuberant spirit there is something impressive in the character of a man who is intellectual, strong of purpose or in passion, and weather-buffeted and braced by adversity.

'Miss Rose,' he said, leaning his elbow on the sill of the window, and crossing his feet, which he lashed with his riding whip, 'I should like to send Loveday to take your place beside Mrs. Gaverock.'

'Why so?' asked the girl with a flush of hurt feeling, and with eyebrows lifted in surprise. 'Do not I care for her to the best of my power?'

'To the best of your power—yes,' answered Dennis. He did not look in her face, his dark eyes were fixed on his boots. 'But you have not in you that which the patient requires.'

'What is that?'

'Sympathy.'

'There you are out of your reckoning, Mr. Penhalligan; I am full of love and tenderness to dear aunt. She can never say of me that I neglect her.'

'You do not neglect her,' answered Dennis, 'but you do not understand what the aching heart requires. You endeavour to cheer her, to interest her with descriptions of this, that, and another, lively and entertaining, but unsuitable. You fret her much as she might be fretted by a pretty moth that fluttered over her face, or by the flicker of

shining water in her weary eyes. She does not ask to be entertained, she does not want distraction. What she needs is companionship cooling as evening dew, soft as silver moonlight. You have never known sorrow, you have had no experience of the anguish of losing that about which all your heart fibres have been laced. You are incapable of helping her. The will is not wanting, what lacks is the faculty. Do not grieve that you have not got it. The faculty grows, like the blossom on the apple-tree which is beaten to make it bloom. Every bruise produces a flower, and every flower a fruit.'

Rose's clear blue eyes were on him, watching his expressive face. Her pretty lips half pouted, half inclined downwards at the corners.

'How has Loveday gained the experience that is denied me?'

'I cannot tell you how,' answered Dennis; 'it suffices that she has. You will see that the poor old lady will cling to her, but without turning from you. You tease her. You are restless, eager to be doing something for her, to stir up her mind to foreign interests. She desires to be let alone, to be wept with, to have no word spoken to her ear, but to feel the pity of a true, loving heart, speaking to her in a voiceless, altogether mysterious way.'

'You think very badly of me, Doctor.'

'Not at all.' He looked up suddenly. 'Heavens knows how highly I think of you, too highly for my own happiness. But let that pass. No, Miss Rose. It is not so. Can you talk Hindustani?'

'I—Hindustani? No.'

'Why not?'

'Because, for a very simple reason, I have never learned it.'

'Why have you not learned it?'

'I have no occasion for it,' answered Rose impatiently, and colour came in two bright spots into her cheeks. She stamped her little foot, 'What do you mean by this, Mr. Penhalligan?'

'This is my meaning, Miss Trewhella. Hearts have their languages as well as lips. You cannot converse with a Hindu, because you cannot speak Hindustani; so you cannot

commune with a sorrowful soul, because you do not know sorrow. Can you comprehend how a Hindu in England must yearn to hear his own tongue? In like way the sorrowful, sick heart longs to have converse with another that can speak and understand the language of which every word is a tear.'

Rose looked on the ground, and now the earnest eyes of Dennis were on her. His lips were curling.

Presently, with a flush of triumph in her bright face, she glanced up, and said impetuously:

'I have taken you in your own toils, sir? You, you, who lecture me on lack of sympathy, how is it that it is precisely of you—of you that patients complain because you are unsympathetic? Answer me that, thou Man of Feeling.'

He shrugged his shoulders and considered. Then, with a scornful smile playing about his mouth, he replied, 'Miss Trewhella, thou Lady *sans* Feeling, I will explain the riddle: for the same reason that you make a bad nurse. I am, perhaps, unsympathetic towards the sick, because I have never had a day's illness—no aches have racked my bones or nerves. I have not even had a catarrh to make me snuffle in sympathy with him who has a cold in his head. My trials and troubles have not been of that sort, they have gone under another category.'

'In what category, tell me?' The question was impertinent, and Rose looked at him timidly, uncertain how he would take it.

'It is useless my telling you. You would not understand me. Your life is one of unclouded happiness. You have never been in life's battle, never have received bullets and barbs of iron in your flesh which lie there unextracted, festering, and making existence an agony.'

'No, I have not had that experience, and I have no desire of acquiring it.'

'I hope you never may have it.'

'I should be afraid to send for you, were I sick,' said Rose; 'you would dissect my fibres as callously as if you were unripping a rush mat, and cut into my poor flesh as coldly as if you were slicing a melon. I should look up into your face in vain for pity.'

'Indeed, indeed no? If you were in suffering, I would

be unable to touch you, not from callousness, but from emotion. And you know that, and you speak thus because you know it will set all the threads of my soul quivering.' He passed his hand over his face. Rose saw she had gone too far ; she rapidly changed the subject.

'Loveday,' she said, 'is full of tenderness to the sick. You are quite right in wishing to send her here to be with dear Aunt Gaverock.'

Then she said no more. Nor did he. After an awkward silence of a minute, she exclaimed brightly, as a thought flashed up in her mind, 'Now, Mr. Penhalligan, I am not going to let you off without chastisement. You have been hard on me, fluttering all my shortcomings, like the linen from the wash on lines on a Tuesday. I will not let you go without a last word, which is woman's prerogative ; without a last touch, as in a game of prisoner's base.'

'Very well, touch me.'

'You will not be angry ?'

'How can I, when you set me the example of bearing sharp instruction with so sweet an air ?'

'Then be lamb-like now, Mr. Dennis, and listen to reproof. What I want to say is this. It does seem to my stupid head that both you and Loveday have gone through a rough school.'

'Yes, it is so—she and I alike.'

'And it seems to me that the same master, and the same teaching, and the same rod, have sent you out very diverse into the world.'

'Go on,' he said, looking intently at her as she spoke.

'She has been sweetened by her sorrows, and you—soured.'

He made no reply.

'I suppose the bruise does not always become a blossom on the apple-tree—sometimes a canker,' she said.

Then the door burst open, and Hender Gaverock and Gerans entered, the former stamping, shaking himself, and diffusing a chill air, a smell of the sea, and a sense of salt.

'Hullo ! Doctor ! you here ? How is my lady ? Got over her hysterics yet ? Here am I back, pickled in brine, and tough as tanned hide. I had a near touch this time, though ; and if I hadn't made up my mind not to be drowned I should have followed David and Con to Davy

Jones's locker. I held on to the keel with fingers and toes and with every claw of my will, which can grip like a crab. How is the mistress? I am very sorry about poor Con. Better, however, to have swallowed too much salt water than to be smothered in law-dust. Poor fellow! I'm as sorry at his loss as a man can be. However, that which can't be cured must be roasted and eaten, as the cook said of the pork in summer, when the pig was killed. I am sure I am as disturbed about Con as a father can be, but I don't go into hysterics. This is the way of women. Humour them, and they come round in time. I'll tell you what. If poor Con's body had been recovered, and we could have had a decent burial with cake and ale, and hatbands and scarves, the old lady would have rather liked it, and have been hopping about like a winged magpie. It is nothing but the lack of a burial which makes her take to her bed. I am sixty-five. I know women.'

'Whither are you going, Mr. Gaverock? Not up to your wife's room?' exclaimed Penhalligan.

'Yes, I am. What stands in the way? She'll be glad to hear particulars. It will rouse her out of her fit of hysterics.'

'I must beg, my dear sir, that you do not disturb her now. She must be soothed, not excited. This is not a case of hysterics by any means.'

'Don't you suppose she will be impatient to hear of poor Con, how he managed the sheet? He'd not forgotten that. I was half afraid of trusting it into his hand, but we were capsized through no fault of his. We went over and the sail was full of water. There was no help for it. Con and I fought a gallant fight; he ought to be here now, but is so much younger than me that he has not my strength.'

'You must not go to auntie,' said Rose. 'I am about to run to Nantsillan myself for Loveday, as I only disturb and irritate aunt. Loveday is the proper medicine and nurse for her.'

'Very well! very well!' said the old man impatiently. 'Pshaw! the house smells of medicine bottles. Come out into the fresh air, Gerans. Sickness makes a whole house stuffy. Besides, I want to see the horse you bought at Wadebridge Fair.'

When the Squire and his son had left the hall, Rose said, 'Mr. Penhalligan, I think I understand what you mean by the unspoken language. I do not think my uncle and aunt have that speech in common.'

'Mr. Gaverock,' answered Dennis, 'has so crushed out all exhibition of sensibility in himself, and laughed and scorned it out of others, that he dare not show his true feelings. I have little doubt that he is more sensible of his son's death than he allows others to see. As he has checked in himself and in those about him every token of feeling, he has lost the capacity to sympathise with suffering.'

Half an hour later Loveday Penhalligan arrived. Rose thought her looking very unwell, she was so pale, and her eyes sunken. She asked her if she were ailing. Loveday shook her head. She even tried to smile, but failed.

Loveday wore a dark navy-blue cloth gown and a white kerchief about her neck crossed over her bosom and pinned behind. Her hair was plain, drawn back into a knot, and covered by a white cap. Her sleeves were to her elbows, where they were frilled, and she wore long black mittens. Her features were not regular and classical, and she had an olive complexion ; but there was a sweetness in her expression which made every one say she was pretty—some declared she was beautiful. Her eyes were, however, her great charm, large, deep, soft, and full of feeling ; eyes into which any one might look, and which spoke as eyes can speak of a patient, loving, and meek soul. Dennis saw that she did not assume a black gown, though she had one, and he knew thereby that she was resolved to have her secret kept. It would be more precious, more holy to her, if hidden in the deeps of her faithful soul. She was not one who cried out for sympathy. She was happiest in keeping her joys and sorrows to herself, or sharing them only with her brother. They were desecrated when made public. She was reticent and retiring without being dull and shy. She never pushed herself into, or in society. She had to be sought out ; but when found, and brought into conversation, her intelligence, her pleasant humour, and kindliness made her very attractive. The men all liked her, and the girls were not jealous.

Mrs. Gaverock's wan, troubled face kindled the moment

she entered her room. Loveday drew a chair by her bedside and took the old lady's hand in hers and kissed it respectfully.

Mrs. Gaverock said nothing, but lay looking at her. Her eyes were no longer mazed, her reason had returned; but she was very weak, and unable to speak above a whisper. But she was thinking, and thinking of one thing, her great loss; every now and then a tear trickled from her eye, and she was too weak or unconscious to put up her hand to wipe it away. Loveday saw this at once, and with her handkerchief very gently dried each tear as it welled out of the faded eyes. Towards sunset the girl was startled by the old woman putting out her disengaged hand and trying to draw herself up by the bedpost.

'Can I help you?' asked Loveday, putting her arms round her and raising her.

'Con said,' whispered Mrs. Gaverock—'Con said he was married.'

Loveday's hand that held that of the patient involuntarily quivered.

'I have been looking at you,' said the poor mother, 'and I wished—oh, I have wished so much—that he had married you.'

Loveday hesitated for a moment; her face became paler and her heart fluttered. Then she stooped, drew the old lady up in her bed; she seated herself on it, so that Mrs. Gaverock could rest in her arms, and, putting her cheek against that of the old woman, said, 'Your wish is fulfilled. He did take me.'

Two hours later Dennis returned. He found the Squire with Gerans and Rose at supper. The latter stood up, took a candle, and said, 'I will go with you, Mr. Penhalligan, and relieve Loveday.'

She and the doctor entered the sick-room. Twilight had succeeded set of sun, and then came darkness. When they entered with the light they found Mrs. Gaverock lying in Loveday's arms, asleep. Tears sparkled on her eyelashes, but her face was peaceful; it had lost its despairing, distressed expression.

Loveday's eyes were also wet, and there were glistening paths on her cheeks; but she smiled gently at her brother and Rose as they entered, and held up her finger to impose

on them silence. Dennis looked attentively at the sleeper, and then at his sister.

'Mrs. Gaverock is better,' he said in a low tone. 'She has had better medicine than I could provide out of the Pharmacopœia.' Then he turned to Rose and said in a still lower tone, audible only to her, 'Do you now understand me when I refer to the unspoken, unwritten language?'

CHAPTER X.

A WOMAN'S SOUL.

'GERANS,' said the Squire, 'I'm sorry your mother takes on so about Con. I can't see the sense of it. When a thing has happened, and can't be undone, accept it. Why, the Camelford and Padstow Bank failed two years ago, and I had a score of their notes in my pocket-book. I did not spread the notes out before me, and weep over them till I had sopped them to pulp. No, I burnt them all and said no more on the matter. We can't fish Con up, and, if we did, what comfort would that be to a natural man? If your mother sticks in bed we shall have to get a housekeeper, or the maids will be up to jinks. That doctor comes here every day to see her, but I know better than he how to cure her. A stiff glass of rum and hot water, with a lemon slice floating on top and a dust of nutmeg, and sugar to taste. Lord! Gerans, there's nothing like it, whether you get the shivers, or a nip of rheumatism, or have a domestic affliction, or get bad notes, or begin to think about your soul. I was cut up, I can tell you, when I was at the Falcon Inn at Bude. I was very sorry for Con, but I took the stiffest glass I could brew, and I put a bit of cucumber in it, and that relieved me wonderfully. I tumbled into bed—no sheets—between blankets, and slept like a cat in the ashes. Your mother wants rousing. I believe it's nothing but bile. I'd like to put her on horseback and send her after the hounds; get her liver well shaken, and, bless my heart, she'd be as right as Greenwich time next day, and mope no more over Con. I don't suppose Rose's habit would fit her, and she couldn't go without one. What a pity it is that the gun went to the bottom with Con!

Capital gun that was ; I'm only thankful that I didn't lend Con mine, but made him take yours. Lord! if it had been mine was drowned, I should have been angry. I know that gun, and it knows my hand on it, as well as Phœbus knows my touch on the reins. Gerans, what do you think of Rose, eh?'

'Rose!' echoed the young man, startled by the abrupt question. 'She is very nice.'

'Nice—that is cool praise. Say something warm.'

'Well, father, I think her very bright, cheerful, and pleasant in the house.'

'To be sure she is—full of fun, and no nonsense about her. Can't do without her now, can we?'

'We shall have to some day, when she marries.'

'What! take four hundred a year away? Not so, my good boy. I had intended her for Con, as you get Towan, and there was no salt in the box for him; but, as Con has departed, she is at your disposal. Four hundred a year in house property at Truro. I'll tell you my plan, Gerans. We'll sell this property and buy Trevithick. That will be for sale before long, and it will fit on to this estate as one nutshell on to another, and as cream fits junket.'

'But, my dear father——'

'There must be no hesitation. Stay, I'll have in some rum at once. Upon my word, I'm low this evening with the smell of medicine, and the popping in and out of that doctor. We'll have a bowl of punch and discuss it and your marriage together. If you've objections we'll drown them ; scruples, grate them up into the nutmeg and give zest to the bowl. It is not against the law : she is not your brother's widow.'

'Con knew nothing of this, did he?'

'No, how could he? I had no time to arrange it with him.'

'Or Rose?'

'No, I had not broached it to her.

'But you are premature, father——'

'Premature! What a word to stop my mouth with. I will it, and that is enough. If Con had lived, he should have had Rose and her house property at Truro ; as he is dead, you shall have her and buy Trevithick. That is settled.'

'But Rose may object.'

'Golly! I'd like to see her. She object to a strapping boy like you? If I choose it—full stop—the thing is done.'

Gerans was so astonished that he could not speak. He sipped his glass and stared at his father.

'Now you know what suit to lead,' said old Hender Gaverock. 'Lead hearts and I'll trump. I suppose there must be a little sentiment and moonshine and treacle and nightingale's songs. Girls like that, but it is not business. It is like the borage floating on top of cider cup; it gives a sort of a poetical flavour, and it is an ornament, but in itself it is nothing. Give her the blossom, but you drink the cup.'

'I do not suppose Rose cares for me, and, as for myself——'

'You can't help liking her. Besides, what is the odds? Women are women and gulls are gulls, they are all alike—one a little whiter and one a little noisier than another; but if you must have a wife, I don't see—and I've lived long enough to know—that it matters very much whom you take. They are as much alike as herrings. Some have soft roes and some have hard, and some begin with very soft roes, which become gritty as gravel in old age. You might go to Land's End and Lizard and not fare better. That is settled. As soon as decency permits, after the loss of Con, you take Rose and her four hundred, and we'll manage Trevithick.'

Then Loveday Penhalligan came in. She had been with Mrs. Gaverock, but was relieved for the night by Rose Trewhella. The Squire and his son stood up on her entry.

'Come here, Miss Loveday,' said Hender Gaverock; 'we are discussing a bowl of rum-punch, and all it lacks to make it perfect is that you should put your lips to it. Come here!' he repeated in his dictatorial, domineering manner; 'I remember when in this very hall we drank the ladies' healths out of vessels five inches long by one inch deep, and they were made of satin—the ladies' own shoes.'

'My pattens are in the hall, Squire; you may try to drink my health out of them.'

'Bring them in, Gerans, and we'll fit finger glasses to the rings and play forfeits who spills a drop in draining the glass or breaks it.'

'No, Squire Gaverock, I will not lend my pattens for that; Mrs. Gaverock will hold me guilty of her broken bowls.'

'Take my chair, Miss Loveday,' said the old man, pointing to a leather-covered arm-chair, high-backed, by the fire.

'For a moment only,' answered the girl. She took the chair he had vacated for her, and laid her hands on the arms; the back of the chair and the protruding carved sides were above her head. She was framed in old stamped gilt leather, while the red firelight flickered over her pale face, dark hair, and large soft eyes.

'Now, Miss Penhalligan,' said the Squire, 'I am glad I have cornered you, for I want a word. You are spoiling Mrs. Gaverock. It is very kind of you to come, but don't condole with her—it makes her worse. She wants stirring up. I know women.'

'Pardon me, you do not.'

'I—I not know them!' laughed the old man. 'Golly! I have had sixty-five years' experience of them, and I ought to understand them.'

'No, you have spent sixty-five years in their society, and you understand them less now than you did sixty-five years ago. Then you might have learned, now you are past acquiring the knowledge.'

The old man stared at Loveday, amazed at her audacity.

'You think,' pursued the girl, 'that a woman's soul is to be tinkered with a slater's sax.[1] It is of too fine a nature to be touched even with the thumb. When a particle of dust enters your watch and stops the hands you hold your breath as you examine the works, lest a breath should rust them. A woman's heart is more delicate in its mechanism than that, and a rough touch and a rude blast will spoil it for ever. You know our Cornish proverb, "The earth is strewn with potsherds." It means that everywhere, in

[1] The sax is the short chopper used by slaters in cutting and shaping slates. The word is the Saxon *seax*, a short sword. It is in use in the West of England.

every village, almost in every house, are broken lives, lives broken by rough usage and careless handling. You would have used the finger-glasses for a jest and a forfeit, and heeded nothing if they fell and were shattered. We poor women are like these same finger-glasses, full of fresh and pure water for you men to dip your soiled fingers into and cleanse them, not for you to convert into bumpers to break for a wager.'

'Golly!' exclaimed old Gaverock. 'I called you in here, Miss, that I might have a word with you, and you are reading me a lecture. It will do you good, Gerans, I hope. I am past learning, as Miss Loveday has graciously informed us.'

There was nothing offensive in her manner; she spoke gently, almost pleadingly, and she looked delicate and pretty in the high-backed chair with her elbows on the arms, and the white frills trembling as she moved her long fingers as though playing on a harpsichord, but really in nervous fear, on the rounded ends of the chair-arm. As she spoke a light dew came out on her pure brow, and her long dark lashes were hung with molten frost drops.

'You must not be angry with me, Squire,' she said, looking timidly at him: 'if I am very bold with you it is my love for Mrs. Gaverock which makes me speak. Leave the dear old lady to Dennis and me; we will do our utmost for her, but you must not interfere and throw down the stones we set up.'

'And Rose—does she count for nothing?'

'No, I do not say that. Rose's part will come later. The sunshine will cherish and brighten when the broken flower is strong enough to bear the heat and light, but a little shade and cool and silence are needed now.'

'Very well. Have things purely your own way. It is no pleasure to me to go into a sick-room. I'll keep away altogether.'

'Not that either,' said Loveday. 'Mrs. Gaverock will like to see you. She will expect you, and be pained if you do not visit her. When you go, be gentle, not boisterous, and not say much about Constantine. If you speak of him, speak tenderly.'

The old man rubbed his chin, then turned thoughtfully to Gerans.

'I understand her,' he said. 'Last time I went up clattering in my water-boots ; I'm to go in pumps, that is what she means.' He rubbed his chin again. 'I'll shave before I kiss her. I dare say I scratched her last time. But what a roundabout way she has of saying it.'

'Comfort must be applied to a dulled soul,' said Loveday, 'like gold leaf, that is so thin and tender that it may not be touched. I have seen a gilder blow the flickering sheet into the air and let it lightly, softly fall where it is to rest, and it has fallen over the whole surface, and hidden every blemish. But if you apply it with a finger you tear it, with a brush you crease it, and leave a crinkled, ragged surface full of rents and oozing size. Long experience is needed to lay the golden leaf ; afterwards, another hand, less experienced, may burnish it.'

Then Loveday stood up.

'It is time for me to be at home,' she said. 'Dennis will be expecting his supper on his return from his round.'

'I will accompany you !' exclaimed Gerans, starting to his feet.

'I can return well by myself. There is no one and nothing I need fear.'

'Certainly not alone,' said Gerans, 'now that the night has fallen. You are so surpassing kind in coming here daily to see my dear mother, that I cannot suffer you to return unaccompanied.' He took his hat, helped her into her shawl, and gave her his arm.

When she was gone old Gaverock emptied his glass, kicked the logs together on the hearth, and growled : 'She is right so far, that I don't know women as they are in these days. Lord ! the impudence to address me as she has. This is what comes of the French Revolution. We shall have Charlotte Cordays here next.'

The night was not dark, the plovers were still about, screaming, and from the cliffs could be heard the noise of the gulls. High overhead a flight of brent-geese went by, barking like aërial dogs.

'Loveday,' said Gerans, 'I have not seen you since I heard of the relationship in which we stand—that is, I have not seen you so as to speak to you in private. As you heard my father address you as Miss Penhalligan and Miss Loveday, you understand that he has not been made aware

of that as yet. I have promised Dennis to tell my father, but I have not had a favourable opportunity for doing so.'

'I do not see occasion for it,' said Loveday. 'Let it be buried in the past.'

'Poor dear Con acted very wrongly by you. He ought to have been more considerate of——'

'Not a word against him!' interrupted the girl. 'As you have not told Mr. Gaverock, let the story remain untold. I ask nothing from him; I acted wrongly and I must bear the consequence. I shall always have your regard, I trust?'

'Always, always, dear Loveday!'

'That suffices. Mrs. Gaverock knows, and is happy in the knowledge. There is really no occasion why your father should be troubled by being told what has taken place. It is in the past. It can do no good to repeat it, and I know he would be very indignant if he heard it.'

'Well, sister, his anger would blow away in a week or two.'

'In that week he would say words which would hurt your mother and me where our hearts are most tender, and the wounds would not heal for years.'

'It is but right, Loveday, that your connection with the family should be known and acknowledged.'

'If it were, reflections would be made on poor Constantine for not having himself made it known and having exacted acknowledgment months ago.'

'That is true, but your honour is more to be considered than my brother's memory. I cannot in conscience submit.'

'You do not understand a woman's soul,' answered Loveday quietly. 'It is of that nature that it will endure anything rather than that the slightest injury should be done, even to the memory of the man she loves. But do not be troubled on that score. My secret is safe in the hands of yourself and your dear mother. In such good kind hands let it lie. Good-night, brother Gerans; I am at my gate. Think better of women and deal more tenderly with their fluttering hearts than does your father with his experience of sixty-five years.'

CHAPTER XI.

A STUDY IN DRAWING.

PRAXITELES is said to have sculptured an Eros which seemed to laugh, but which, when the eyes of the figure were bandaged, seemed to be grave, even stern. Rose Trewhella's eyes danced with the *ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα* of the sparkling summer sea, but there was sufficient decision in the lines of her mouth and in the moulding of her nostrils to show that there were the elements of a firm character in her, undeveloped—a potentiality and a promise. At present she was frivolous, careless, pleasure-loving, without a perception of the seriousness of life, without a thought of dangers that might menace her unless watched against, of pitfalls among which she might be drawn by her own thoughtlessness.

She had been spoiled as a young girl, and had grown to be wayward and exacting. Her father had been careless and good-natured. She had been petted by him, and flattered by his fox-hunting friends. She had associated very little with girls of her own age. Her governess had been ruled by her, she had fixed her own hours of work and studies. Her education had, therefore, been desultory.

But there was good, sterling good, in the mine of her heart, overlaid with much worthless stuff. She had obtained whatsoever she wanted from her father by coaxing or by sulking ; and she supposed that these two recipes were infallible, and would suffice her to get all she wanted out of other men.

When Gerans returned from Nantsillan, he found Rose in the hall with his father. She had left Mrs. Gaverock when the old lady went to sleep. The Squire liked Rose ; she joked with him, teased him, showed him a certain amount of deference, and submitted to his authority. Rose sat in the chair recently vacated by Loveday, and presented the most marked contrast to her. Her hair was tossed into a tangle about her head, like floss silk ; it was fair and golden ; in it was a fine strip of white cambric, but whether tying the hair or entangled in it, inextricably, could hardly be told. It was like a ribbon we sometimes see woven into

a bird's nest among the twigs. Her cheeks were bright with colour, and her blue eyes sparkled with mischief.

Directly Gerans entered she attacked him.

'You have had a *very* pleasant walk in the twilight, Cousin, I am sure.'

'I have seen Miss Loveday home.'

'You need not tell me that. I got a glimpse of you starting arm in arm, and thought you made a pretty pair.'

Gerans coloured.

'It would have been unmannerly to have let her return to Nantsillan unescorted.'

'Gerans the gallant! Gerans the courtly! What it must be for a young damsel to have such a knight to attend her! You seemed to be in close conference I suppose the subject was most interesting—to yourselves.'

Rose saw that Gerans was uncomfortable, and so she went on mischievously. She was not jealous of Loveday, but she liked tormenting Gerans, who was not agile of mind to evade or parry her thrusts.

'Now,' said she, going up to him, and looking slyly into his eyes, 'what was it all about? Tell me, if you can, the topic of your talk.'

Gerans was confused, and stammered an incoherent reply. Afterwards, when he was alone, he thought, 'How stupid of me! I should have answered that we were speaking of poor Con. But that is the way with me; I never hit on the right thing to say till it is too late to say it.'

The old father's suspicions were roused, and he looked at his son with mistrust. When Rose had left the room he said roughly, 'Gerans, I will have no foolery with Miss Loveday. I have told you my mind. You know what is expected of you. As for Mistress Malapert, she is an impudent hussy, and I dislike her. Prodigiously daring to tell me that I know nothing of women! What is her age? Twenty-one, I suppose. Been a woman three years, only a girl before, and I have had sixty-five years of experience of the sex. What was that she said of a woman's soul? A fine piece of mechanism not to be breathed on. That is flam! It is like a peacock's tail. Whirr! spread to blaze and dazzle you with its glitter and colour and eyes, then draggled in the wet and mud, and dropping a dowdy feather

in the dank grass. Pshaw! It is a thing of show. I not know women!

> A woman, a dog, and a walnut tree,
> The more you whip 'em, the better they be.

Mind you this, Gerans, I will not allow you to think of Loveday. As poor Con has gone to the bottom of the sea, you must take Rose. That is a settled matter. As for Mistress Loveday, God bless my soul! we should fight if she and I were in the house together a week. I cannot stand opposition, leastways from a woman.'

Next day Rose's mood was changed. She would not speak at early dinner, and went into the parlour to sit by herself, with her hands in her lap, looking out of the window. Gerans followed her.

She did not turn her head when he opened the door, nor when he came across the floor to her. He placed himself in the window, with his back to the light, and looked at her. Her lips were pouting, and her brows contracted.

'Are you unwell, Rose?'

'Oh, dear, no, Mr. Gerans Gaverock. But it does not matter; no one here cares how I am.'

'Why do you say that? You surely know how highly we all regard you.'

'You regard me so highly as the lark, that is so high that it is altogether lost to sight, Master Gaverock.'

'You used to call me Cousin Gerans.'

'It was a mistake. You came to consider me as a cousin, one on whom the common courtesies of life, when expended, were wasted. Look on me rather as an acquaintance, and then I shall receive proper treatment.'

'But what have I done to offend you?'

'Oh, nothing,' said Rose, rising and settling her skirts and sitting down again. 'That creeper should be cut; it is trailing over the window.'

'I will see to the creeper another time. Why are you cross with me?'

'Cross! You are rude; a lady is never cross. But this is the way with you men—you charge us with having the vapours, and do not consider the occasion, which is to be found in yourselves.'

'But what have I done to offend you?'

'Nothing,' answered Rose, looking him coldly in the face.

'Then why are you so dissatisfied?'

'I am not dissatisfied, because I have expected nothing. I am dissatisfied when taken to a waxwork, and see what poor figures are within the booth, different from the painted promise without, but I am not dissatisfied where nothing has been promised and nothing performed.'

Gerans was perplexed. He looked at her with puzzlement in his brain, and said, humbly, 'I don't know what you want; but I do know that we are all your dutiful servants, waiting on your wishes.'

'I have been wanting to wind a skein of wool for a week, and no one has offered me his hands on which to spread it.'

'But, surely, Miss Rose, you had only to express the desire, and my father or I would have flown to offer you help.'

'With the eagerness you flew yesterday to offer it to Loveday. I warrant me she had not to ask for your arm. You forestalled her wish; you pressed your arm on her. Was it not so?' Gerans was confused. 'Whereas poor I—I must wait a week, and ask outright for help, or a hand is not held out to me.'

'Surely, Miss Rose, this is unreasonable——'

She interrupted him with an assumption of anger, and started back in her chair. 'Unreasonable, am I, and cross-grained, crabbed, spiteful; what next? Really, Mr. Gerans Gaverock, the Master of Manners does not come round these parts, or I would pay to send you to be schooled by him.'

'I did not know you wanted any wool winding, or I would have been proud and happy——'

'You did not see that I was working a border of a running scroll for the drawing-room fire-mat. You did not give sufficient thought to consider that my little ball of red wool was drawing to an end. You have no eyes for my necessities. They are engrossed by Miss Penhalligan, I take it.'

Gerans coloured.

'You deal very hardly with me,' he said, penitently.

'I assure you I am not thinking of Miss Loveday in the way you suppose.'

Rose laughed merrily and mockingly. 'Mr. Gerans, I do not want your assurances. I am too supremely indifferent to you to be made a confidant of your partialities.'

'Where is the wool?' asked Gerans, desperately.

'Here. Are you going to be polite?'

Gerans held out his hands.

When a young and pretty girl has got a man fast with a skein about his fingers, which she is winding in a ball, she has him completely in her power. He is conscious that he is in a position somewhat ludicrous and not manly. He has to raise one hand and depress the other in obedience to the beck of her finger. Whatever she may say he cannot escape. He is her captive for a quarter of an hour. The man may have splendid abilities, but he is unable to exercise them: his mind must follow the run of the thread forwards and backwards, and he cannot think of anything else. At the same time the girl is winding mechanically, and exercising all her wits to torment or coquet with the victim.

Gerans, honest-hearted, slow of thought, spent a very uncomfortable twenty minutes thus tied; he was in continual fear of entangling the threads. They did catch occasionally, and, when they caught, Rose was obliged to come close to him, make him hold up his hands, whilst her golden head turned and dipped about, very close to his, and her delicate, fragrant hands passed in and out between his palms, turning the ball this way, then that—he could almost have thought she was purposely entangling the wool, had he possessed sufficient guile to suppose it.

When a young girl holds the ball, and a man has the skein, there is a link of connection established between them, a wire of communication is drawn from one battery to another. The days of which we write were not those of the electric telegraph; but a telegraph of some sort, conveying a series of messages, was set up whenever a young lady asked a youg gentleman to hold the wool for her while she unwound. A heart was at each end, a battery and a registering table together. What touches, what tremulous quivers, what strange little tweaks the ball-spinner is able to send along the thread to the hands of the skein-holder!

It happens that the threads of the skein pass over the most sensitive portion of the hand, between the forefinger and the thumb, and this registers all the little defiances, and trembling entreaties, and quivering appeals, and bold assaults of the ball-winder, and delivers them all, sealed from every eye, direct to the heart of the skein-holder, who cannot refuse them, so engrossed is he in his mind on the vibration of the thread over his hands.

When at length the end of the wool was drawn slowly, almost reluctantly, off his left hand, and he recovered the possession, first of the right, then of the left, Gerans was in a bewildered condition, not very sure that he retained possession of his heart—whether that had not also been wound away at the tail of the worsted and secured by Miss Rose.

'Thank you so *very* much, Cousin Gerans,' said she, raising her blue eyes and looking at him with an appeal for mercy in them. 'I am sure I have been most exacting.'

'Not at all. I like it.'

'Do you now?' A roguish twinkle came into her eyes, and dimples formed at the corners of her mouth. 'You like being made to take the place of the backs of chairs. How good of you to say so; but you do not mean it?'

'I am always ready to do anything for you, Rose.'

'Then you will not be cross with me any more?'

'I cross!' He was justly astonished.

'I suppose that no one knows his own faults; certainly no man will confess his—leastways to a woman. Yet, you have been very cross and peevish with me. I could scarcely bear it.' Her voice shook, as the thread had shaken in her fingers lately.

'You have been very much mistaken, Rose.'

'No, I have not. Trust a girl to read the moods of those she is with. She opens in the sun, and shivers and droops when there are clouds in the sky.'

'I was unaware of it. I am sure you misunderstood; I could not be cross with you.'

'You want someone always at your side to tell you of your faults, and bid you correct your blunders.'

'Oh, Rose! if you will execute that office for me, it will be a delight to me to mend my ways.'

'You would not believe me when I told you you were erring.'

'I would believe anything from those lips.'

'Then you would have your faith sorely tried,' said Rose with a laugh, 'for I say one thing this moment and another thing that. Hark! Mr. Gerans Gaverock, there comes Dennis down from your mother's room.'

'Dennis!'

'You did not hear him go up, you were so engrossed in the skein. I did; and now he returns. I must positively see him!' Then she ran into the hall, and was followed by Gerans with heightened colour.

'How do you do?' said the girl, stepping up to the doctor. 'How is Mrs. Gaverock? Why has not Loveday been up to-day? Is it the drizzle that detains her? What a day it is!—rain squeezed through a hair sieve, neither falling nor rising nor driving, but floating in the air.'

'I have found my patient slowly mending,' said Penhalligan. 'She must have the same treatment—must be kept very quiet.'

'And Loveday? Is she coming here?'

'Not to-day. She is not very well, and there is no necessity.'

'Then I will go to her. Mr. Penhalligan, will you hold an umbrella over me? I have found this day more dull in the house than it can possibly be outside, and so I will venture forth. Mr. Gerans has informed me that I have the vapours. I will take my vapours out into the general fog. May I ask you, Mr. Penhalligan, to wrap that cloak round me? I am clumsy with my overshoes: is it asking too much of you to desire that you would put your hand to help to slip them over my feet? Thank you; you are very kind. I dare say I shall not find it *quite* as dismal when I am out of Towan as the day has seemed to me looking forth from the windows. You will lend me your arm, and be careful that the drip of the umbrella does not go down my back—will you not, Mr. Penhalligan?'

When they were gone Gerans took up the bellows and began to blow the log that was smouldering on the dogs in the fireplace.

'Well, Gerans,' said his father, 'how are you getting on?'

'Middling,' answered the young man. 'The log is green, and will not blaze.'

Old Gaverock snatched the bellows from his hand, and sent puffs from the nozzle on his son.

'Oh, you green stock!' he shouted. 'It is you that do not kindle. When I was a young man it was quite other. You are slow and sleepy, without spark and crackle. What do you mean by allowing Penhalligan to carry your mistress off to Nantsillan? You be on the alert, or he'll take her away altogether—and then we shall lose Trevithick. Gerans, I went all over Trevithick yesterday, and I'll take you there to-morrow. We must have it. It comes alongside of Dinnabol Farm, as if made to run with it. At Dinnabol the sheep get the rot because of the wet clay; let them have the healthy moor of Trevithick to run on, and you can fatten at Dinnabol. In the autumn the mischief is done in the clay lands, and at Dinnabol we have no sound runs for the sheep. Gerans, we must and we shall have Trevithick.'

'I don't suppose Rose cares for me,' said Gerans in a depressed mood, which showed itself by his tone of voice. 'If she had any regard for me she would not tease me so cruelly.'

'You are a fool, Gerans. I know she likes you.'

The young man shook his head; he was very red in the face, annoyed with Rose, angry with Penhalligan.

'I tell you she does,' pursued his father. 'That Mistress Malapert dared to say I knew nothing of women—I with my sixty-five years' experience. I can see through Rose as if she were a tumbler of water dipped out of the Atlantic. She is drawing you, Gerans. I know it *because* she teases you.' The old man began to sing—

> Phyllis is my only joy,
> Sometimes forward, sometimes coy.

'She was kind to Dennis Penhalligan and cruel to me,' said Gerans.

'My good fool!' exclaimed the old man, 'that is all part of her play. Run after her. You are not going to let that Doctor Sawbones walk with her to Nantsillan and walk back with her as well?'

'She might not like my pursuing her.'

'Nonsense! she wants you to run after her.'

He forced his son out of the house, then he reseated himself in his armchair, and burst out laughing. 'And so Mistress Malapert said I did not know women!'

CHAPTER XII.

NANTSILLAN.

Rose Trewhella had hardly got out of sight of Towan before she let go her hold of Dennis's arm, and said, 'Mr. Penhalligan, I do not think that the umbrella is of the slightest use against the mist. Moreover, there are so many puddles which I must skip over or circumvent that I can do better for myself if I walk unassisted. How long have you known my cousin Gerans? Have you been friends from boyhood? You know he is not really my cousin; indeed, we are no relation whatever, but it would sound too unfriendly to call him Mr. Gerans, and too familiar to call him Gerans, so I split the difference and designate him Cousin. I think him very nice, do not you?'

'Whoever commends himself to you needs no praise from me,' answered Dennis.

'Now, Mr. Penhalligan, this is one of your stiff, set phrases, fine sounding and evasive. I want your *real* opinion of him.'

'I think that he is truthful, sincere, and kind-hearted.'

'I am glad you think that. But he is stupid and slow; you will allow that?'

'He will mend in time.'

'When?'

'When weaned.'

Rose looked round and laughed. 'What do you mean?'

'At present he thinks, sees, hears, smells through his father's organs, and acts as his members. When the old Squire dies, or when Gerans marries, he will cut his teeth. He has not his brother's quickness, but such docility and honouring of a father must deserve him length of days in the land—denied to the less submissive younger brother.'

Rose bit her lip, and looked out of the corners of her eyes at Penhalligan. He was walking with his head down; his dark face was wet with the fog, his lips were set, and his brow was gloomy.

'I am sorry for Loveday,' said Rose. 'What is the matter with her?'

He moved his shoulders uneasily. 'Nothing to signify. She cannot go every day to Towan. There are home duties. We do not keep a servant. This is our washing day.' He coloured as he spoke.

'Why did you not say so, instead of pretending she was ill? I shall be in the way. I shall go back.' She stood still.

'No, no, Miss Trewhella,' he begged; 'do not return. Pray come on. Loveday will be so delighted to see you—so honoured by your crossing our mean threshold.'

'Why did you say she was ill when she was not?'

'Because,' he answered, 'I am a moral coward, and I was ashamed to admit that she had the scrubbing and the ironing to do. Poverty is dishonour.'

'Not at all; poverty is honourable.'

'Then why are we ashamed to confess it?'

'We are ashamed to be thought religious and temperate and thrifty; and out of the same perversity we are ashamed to be thought poor. How long have you known Gerans?'

'For five or six years—ever since I have been here.'

'Which did you like best—Gerans or his brother who is dead, Constantine?'

'I preferred the society of the younger. He often came to us. He was musical, so am I, and I have a pianoforte that belonged to my mother.'

'You play? How clever you are!'

'A surgeon need be nimble of fingers; and practice on the keys is good schooling for delicacy of touch on the human nerves. Here we are at my cottage.'

'You are sure I shall not be in the way? I will just speak to Loveday and run away.'

'I will accompany you home if you must return.'

'Not so. I can go back to Towan by myself. But perhaps Gerans will come to fetch me. I am teaching him to be polite to ladies.'

So she went in.

The cottage was small; it consisted of a reception room or hall, small, floored with slate, and low. Also of a tiny parlour at the side, and a surgery. The parlour was unfurnished, and was used as a work-room. The brother and

sister sat in the hall. This room had whitewashed walls; against them were hung the surgeon's diploma, a sampler worked by Loveday's mother when a girl, giving the letters of the alphabet, the numerals, a tree, a flower, and a bird all of the same size.

On the chimney-piece were two good old china vases, relics of better days, and against the wall away from the door was a piano, another relic of a time when the Penhalligans were better off. Before the hearth was a rug made of scraps of cloth woven into a piece of canvas—warm, but plain. Muslin curtains hung over the window. Everything in the room and about the house was very plain, but clean and in excellent order. The garden beds within the wicket-gate were carefully attended to and free from weeds. The flowers in them were common, but bloomed freely, in gratitude for the care shown them. Against the walls of the house were a jessamine and a monthly rose that was a free bloomer. In the hall, although everything was plain, yet an air of snugness and of beauty was afforded by the abundance of flowers and leaves wherewith it was adorned. In saucers were blackberry leaves of every shade between lemon yellow and carmine, beech leaves of warm copper hue, pink dog-wood leaves, and the transparent crimson berries of the wild guelder rose, pale blue Michaelmas daisies, clusters of rose-hips, feathery traveller's-joy, sprigs of crane's-bill still flowering, blue borage, graceful rainbow-coloured carrot leaves, delicate white-veined arrow-headed blades of ivy, beautiful grasses—the table, the chimney-piece, the window, the whatnot, were adorned with posies, each of which was a study in colour, all picked, sorted, settled in their glasses by the skilful fingers of Loveday. Bare of furniture, lacking in ornament the room might be, but it was scrupulously clean, and brightened by these charming clusters of autumn leaves and flowers.

Rose had no time to look round before Loveday herself came to her from the parlour, with colour glowing through the olive skin of her cheeks, and her dark eyes shining with love and pleasure. She held out both her hands to Rose, and Rose saw that they were crinkled with immersion in hot water. Loveday wore a thin cotton gown, and had arms bare from the elbow, very white, streaked with pretty blue veins.

Rose caught Loveday almost boisterously in her arms, and kissed her on both cheeks and on her lips.

'That designing brother of yours pretended you were seriously ill, and brought me here to nurse you. In reality he desired the pleasure of my society; he was tired of the dull walk alone in the mist. Now you are busy, and I suppose I shall be in the way. Yet I must detain you from your work for three minutes. Oh! it is insufferable in Towan. Guardie says to his son, "Gerans, good boy, trot into the parlour and talk to Rose," and in the tame fellow trots. Presently the old gentleman puts in his head at the door and says, "Gerans, good boy, that will do, come here!" Then the tame fellow goes pit-a-pat back to his place at the old man's heel. Next the Squire says, "Curl yourself up in a corner by the fire, and I give you leave to snore." Then the docile creature curls up and snores. Presently the father takes the bread and cuts it up, and says, "Gerans, sit up prettily and beg," so up he sits on his hind feet and holds his front pats before him—so!' She imitated a dog begging. '"Snap!" says Mr. Gaverock, and snap goes Gerans. It is really wonderful how well trained the creature is. Is it not so, Mr. Penhalligan?' asked Rose, turning sharply round and confronting Dennis.

Loveday took Rose by the hand, and drew her into the parlour and shut the door.

'Do not say these sharp things, dear,' she said in a gentle tone. 'Gerans is very good. Look for the excellencies in people, not for their weaknesses, and you will be the happier.'

'I have not spoken half as sharply as your brother,' said Rose, in self-defence. 'I give Gerans credit for being a well-trained poodle; Mr. Penhalligan said he was an unweaned baby.'

'I am sorry Dennis said that; it is not true.'

'Of course you take up the cudgels for Gerans Gaverock,' Rose pouted as she spoke. 'He is so civil to you, and forestalls all your wishes.'

Loveday's clear frank eyes rested on the twinkling blue eyes of Rose, and the latter fell before the steady gaze. 'Dear Rose,' said Loveday, 'Gerans is nothing more to me, can be nothing more to me, than a kind and trusted—almost brother. I shall, I can, think of him in no other

light, so give way to no romantic fancies. Gerans is honourable, straightforward, and simple-hearted. We all have our weaknesses, you as well as he—I most of all. Two men look on the same face and draw it; the one makes a beautiful portrait, the other a caricature. The one leaves out of sight all that is gross, and sordid, and common in the face; he paints the soul—as it might and may be—shining through the features as through a figured globe. The other knows nothing of soul, sees no ideal, believes in none. He grasps everything that is ridiculous, mean, and transitory in the face, and delineates that. You must look at mankind as either the painter or the caricaturist. It is best for us to take the higher platform.' After a short pause: 'Will you help me, dear Rose?'

Rose looked round the parlour; it was wholly unfurnished. The Penhalligans used only the hall. One room sufficed them, and Loveday did her ironing in the parlour. The long deal table was covered with linen, a fire was in the grate, and irons stood around it, becoming heated.

'Rose, I am ironing my brother's collars and shirt-fronts. Will you goffer these frills for me?'

'My dear Loveday!' exclaimed Rose, 'I wish with all my heart I could; but I never did anything useful in all my life, except wool-work.'

'And that is very useful. I wish I had time to do some.'

Rose's heart fluttered and her eyes danced. 'Loveday, you darling! Will you? Oh, don't say me nay!'

'How can I till I know what you want?' said the other, laughing.

'I have begun a mat—that is, the border for a mat to go before the fire. It is very pretty; the ground olive-green with a broad scroll over it of folded ribbon, shaded from red to white. I began it three years ago, and I do a little from time to time. Now I will attack it like a dragon if you will accept it from me and use it for your parlour mat when you fit up this room. Why have you not furnished it?'

'We are waiting for our ship to arrive,' answered Loveday, 'and Nantsillan Cove is so dangerous with reefs that our ship has not yet ventured in.'

'But,' began Rose, looking round her with wonder, 'why does not your servant do this?'

'Because our servant is a little girl of twelve, and she would probably spoil the things.'

'Does she cook your dinners and make the bread?'

'No; I am cook and baker.'

'She cleans the rooms and makes the beds?'

'No; I am housemaid.'

'And the garden? Who attends to that?'

'I am gardener.'

'But Mr. Penhalligan's horse? Surely you are not groom also?'

'No, that I am not; my brother is his own groom.'

'This is very strange to me. And your dresses? And the linen? Are you also dressmaker and scouring maid?'

'Yes, I am.'

'Then,' said Rose, 'I am a very useless creature in the world. I cannot understand you. You work like a common woman, and yet you look always like a lady.'

'Am I not a lady?' asked Loveday, with a quiet smile.

Rose in reply threw her arms round her and kissed her again.

'How good!—how very good you are!' she said with a gush of love and enthusiasm. 'I wish—oh! I wish I were like you!'

Loveday shook her head and went on with the ironing whilst she talked, glad, perhaps, to be able to hide her face by bending over her work.

'No, dear, I am not good. I have committed grave faults; I have done things both foolish and wrong, for which I shall grieve all my days, the shadow of which will always hang over me. I have had more experience of life than you, that is all, and I am oldened by it beyond my years.'

'There is Gerans!' interrupted Rose, starting, as she saw his head pass the window. 'I thought he would come. I suppose his father has sent him. I will charge him with it.'

'Prithee do not,' entreated Loveday, laying aside her work and going up to her. 'You will wound him—that will be the result; and is that a result to be desired?'

'He should come unprompted.'

'Perhaps he has; possibly not. Does it matter? He wanted to leave, and Mr. Gaverock suggested that he should. Two hearts felt kindly towards you instead of one. You should be pleased to have it so. Now, one word with you before we go into the next room to them.' Loveday's face became distressed, and her hand clasped Rose's arm nervously. 'Do not play tricks with my brother. I know you mean no harm, but Dennis is unable to bear trifling. He takes everything seriously, too seriously. You remember the fable of the frogs and the boys who threw stones at them. "What is fun to you," said the frogs, "is death to us."'

Rose's tell-tale mouth twitched, the lips pouted, but the corners went down; she was half disposed at defiance, half to cry.

'We will detain both you and Mr. Gerans,' said Loveday, 'and have tea; then Dennis and I will do our best to amuse you with music.'

'Oh, that will be prime! exclaimed Rose, laughing. 'But how about the ironing? Is Mr. Penhalligan to go limp-collared to-morrow because we are here?'

'Leave that to me. We shall have a pleasant evening.'

CHAPTER XIII.

A QUIET EVENING.

Loveday went out of the parlour at once to meet and welcome Gerans, and invite him in to a dish of tea. 'You will excuse me,' she said smiling, 'if I run away for a few minutes and put off my work-a-day for my holiday gown. It is a holiday indeed for us to entertain friends. Dennis, make up the fire and draw the curtains. Mr. Gerans, there is one corner of the hearth for you, and there is a corner also for Rose, and to her I entrust the bellows.'

Gerans winced at the reference to the bellows, and looked at Loveday. But he remembered that she could not have heard his father's remark, and his colour, which had flashed to his temples, disappeared again.

The little maid of twelve appeared, and laid the cloth,

standing on tiptoe and stretching over the table to smooth out the creases. By the time it was laid evenly, Loveday reappeared in a cloth gown, and helped the child to arrange the table. A pretty Derby tea service appeared, inherited by Loveday from her mother, a rabbit pie, cold, and preserves of whortleberry, and blackberry, and strawberry, of her own making. Then ensued a pause of a quarter of an hour, during which the little maid ran to the nearest farm for cream and butter.

Presently the tea-kettle came in, and was given a final heating on the hall fire, to ensure that the water was really on the boil when poured upon the Chinese leaves. The curtains were drawn, the candles lighted, a faggot of dry wood thrown on the fire, and the little party drew to the table.

Then Rose uttered an exclamation of delight. On her plate lay a little bunch of purple violets. 'Oh, Loveday! how sweet the flowers are! and how sweet of you to give me them!'

'Our violets bloom here all the year round, the glen is so warm and looe (sheltered).'

'Like the pretty thoughts and fragrant virtues of your dear heart,' said Rose eagerly—'Of all flowers I love the violet best.'

'The violets of Nantsillan will not compare with the rose of Towan,' said Dennis Penhalligan.

Rose tossed her head impatiently. 'Spare me your formal compliments,' she said; 'mine was a pretty speech that sprang spontaneous from my heart, and yours is laboured and artificial.'

Rose was, at first, less exuberant in her spirits than usual. What Loveday had said to her in the parlour affected her, but only for a while. She was too buoyant to be long depressed, and by the time tea was over she had regained complete elasticity.

Dennis shook off some of his gloom, and endeavoured to be cheerful. He was very pleased to have Rose at his table, yet at the same time he was ashamed of the bareness of his room, its white walls, its common furniture. He could never dispel the sense of his poverty. He was proud, perhaps vain, not of his appearance, but of his abilities, and the sense of his being unworthily placed and hardly

treated never left him. He was ashamed of his table because the cloth was coarse, of the forks because they were of steel with black handles, of the preserves because they were of ordinary wild fruit. His heart was so cankered with discontent that he could not see and rejoice over the comforts and cleanliness that were his, provided by the care of his sister. He never saw what advantages he had, but he was keen-sighted towards the deficiencies. There is no more dangerous mood than one that is dissatisfied, none more tormenting than that which is unthankful. Loveday had a daily struggle with him to bring him to a better mind, but was unsuccessful.

'Dennis,' she said to him, 'the world is a mirror which reflects our humours—laugh to it, and it laughs back to you; scowl at it, and it returns your defiance. It will answer you as you address it, like an echo, just a note lower.'

Dennis asked Rose during tea if she were fond of music.

'Music!' she answered, clapping her hands. 'Oh, I love it! I love nothing better.'

His dark face lightened as she said this. They had a passion in common.

'Then,' said he, 'I will play you a sonata of Beethoven's; that in C minor. It is my favourite; of others, I have to ask what they mean, but this one tells its own tale. I can play this better than another, not because I have practised it oftener, but because I can speak it through my fingers. Every note expresses a thought of my heart. As I interpret this sonata, it is the utterance of titanic defiance by one wounded in spirit; like a tamed eagle that longs to soar, but cannot, it beats its wings in frenzy and scorn, and gnaws its own heart out, because condemned to lie on earth when its proper sphere is above the clouds. It feels itself cast down and banned by a dark and inexorable power above which denies it light and air. In the *maestoso* you hear the agony of the soul; in the *allegro*, its defiance. There is a battle in which the restive spirit submits, and then revolts, cries out in fury against the iron fate which holds it down, and then throws itself sullenly with face to earth, in sob and moan. Here and there bright and melodious passages flash, like summer lightning, or pass as fra-

grant airs, but they do not lessen the darkness nor alleviate the pain.'

'Do you mean to tell me, Mr. Penhalligan, that all this is contained in a few pages of music?'

'You shall judge for yourself. You have heard my "Argument," now listen to the canto.'

He seated himself at the piano, and began to play. In a moment his soul was caught by the music, and he was carried away from his surroundings, as Elijah was caught and borne upwards in the chariot of fire. After a while, as he was playing, as perhaps he had never played before, his nerves excited by the presence of Rose, he became dimly conscious of something indistinct and irritating, a something that drew him down from his heights, and brought him into the vulgar presence of unworthy surroundings. By degrees he became aware what it was that marred his pleasure—it was a conversation carried on in a low tone in the room. He thought at first that the tiresome little maid was clearing away the tea things, and asking her mistress's instructions; but when he paused to turn a leaf he heard Rose asking Gerans, 'But, really, cousin, what *is* a goose fair?'

He tried to play on, but his interest in the music was gone. Loveday had watched his face, had seen his emotions throughout the performance quiver in his face, and now she read in it disappointment and anger. She went close to his side and said, 'Dennis, this is *caviar* to her; play something lighter, the dance music in Lord Westmoreland's "Bajazet."'

Without answering, he allowed his fingers rapidly to glide into the frivolous, worthless music of the noble *dilettante*.

The talking ceased at once, and Rose's little feet beat the dance time on the slate floor.

Presently Dennis ceased. Then Rose clapped her hands. 'Thank you so much, Mr. Penhalligan. I have enjoyed myself greatly. But really, I did not think Beethoven could have written anything as fine. All the first part struck me as poor stuff, but the *scherzo* at the end was delicious.'

'Come round the fire,' said Loveday quickly, stepping between her brother and Rose, to hide from her the ex-

pression of distress and disgust that passed over his face. 'I have got a lapful of chestnuts from our own tree. We must toast them in the embers; and little Ruth will bring in the glasses. You must taste my metheglin brewed from our own hives, and spicy with thyme from Towan Down.'

'Penhalligan,' said Gerans, 'are you going to the Goose Fair at Camelford?'

Dennis shook his head. 'Why should I go?'

'Loveday might like to be there, and eat Michaelmas goose.'

'Loveday is quite content to be at home,' said Miss Penhalligan.

'You must come, Dennis, and you also, Miss Penhalligan. The Goose Fair is an institution. My father goes, of course. We pick up my aunt and uncle Loveys on the way. It is settled that Rose is to go. I insist on your being my guests. Do not refuse me. Let me count—that makes seven. It takes four to a goose. We will have two. I dare say Anthony Loveys will come with his father and mother to make the eighth.'

Penhalligan looked at his sister doubtfully. Gerans went on: 'A moonlight night to drive home in over the moors. The Squire and the Loveyses can go in the chaise, and you and I, Dennis, and the young ladies in the gigs. There are our trap and yours available. If you will drive Loveday, I will drive Rose.'

'I shall not be able to go, I fear,' said Penhalligan, with darkening brow and quivering lip.

'Cousin Gerans,' exclaimed Rose, 'I should have supposed that it lay with the ladies to choose their partners.'

'By all means,' answered Gerans; 'express your wishes, and they shall be obeyed.'

'Then I think you shall drive Loveday one way, and me the other way. I shall have the pleasure of listening to Mr. Penhalligan's compliments on one of the journeys, and to endure your uncouthness on the other. Which it is to be must be decided by lot. Here, Mr. Gerans, are my hands. One contains a violet, and the other nothing. Choose which you will have for the drive to Wadebridge. If you pick the violet you have Loveday, if you choose the other hand you elect simply me.'

'I take your left,' said Gerans. She opened her hand and showed her rosy palm.

'There, Mr. Penhalligan, yours is the honour and pleasure of driving me home by moonlight over the downs to Towan, after the Goose Fair. Will not that induce you to sacrifice your patients for a day?'

CHAPTER XIV.

THE GOOSE FAIR.

The Goose Fair in the West of England is not a fair at which geese are sold, but is one at which geese are eaten. It takes place about Michaelmas—Old Michaelmas—and then all the country round the town at which it is held makes holiday. The labourers cast aside their flails and picks, put on their best clothes; the servant-maids beg a holiday with glowing cheeks and tears of entreaty; the farmers and their wives, and sons and daughters, and, till not many years ago, the gentry and the parsons, rode or drove to the market town with eagerness to eat goose. Geese ran over the commons in every village, and drank out of the ponds in every farm, and everywhere were eaten at home; nevertheless, a home-fed, home-roasted, home served-up goose was by universal consent a base and insipid dish when compared with Old Michaelmas goose ate in common in the market-town on Goose Fair Day. Better eat no mince pies at Christmas than omit to eat roast goose at Old Michaelmas Fair. Goose eaten then meant plenty throughout the ensuing twelvemonth. The way in which this is expressed in the West Country vernacular is more precise than elegant. To write it would make the page blush the colour of the 'Globe.' Suffice it to say that he who eats roast goose on Goose Fair Day is sure not to have an empty stomach till next Michaelmas.

The Squire was a great stickler for old customs. Every year he drove to Wadebridge and picked up his married sister Barbara, and her husband Anthony Loveys, on the way, and carried them with him to the 'Lion's Head' at Wadebridge, where they dined together—of course—on goose! When his own sons were old enough, and when

young Anthony Loveys, his nephew, was of sufficient age to dine abroad, they were included in the party. Mr. and Mrs. Gaverock and Mr. and Mrs. Loveys sat down to one goose at a table by themselves; and Gerans, Constantine, and Anthony junior, sat down to a second goose at another table by themselves; and being young, hearty, and hungry, the three managed to demolish a goose between them, though, according to orthodox custom, it takes four to eat a goose.

On the fair day a smoke redolent of goose hung over the little town of Wadebridge. The atmosphere in every house was impregnated with it from cellar to attic. The inn kitchens were unable to cook all the birds required, and all the house kitchens in proximity to each inn lent themselves to be utilised for the occasion. The inns had not sitting-rooms to contain the guests, and beds were pulled to pieces and stacked in the garrets, and washstands piled one on another, that sleeping apartments might for the nonce be converted into eating-rooms. The gardens around Wadebridge had their sage reaped down, and their onions torn up and wheelbarrowed into the town days before, to stuff the geese that were to stuff the eaters at the fair. Feathers which had been a shilling a pound all the rest of the year dropped, as suddenly as the mercury before a cyclone, to ninepence. Children turned up their noses at butter, and enriched their bread with yellow goose fat. Dogs, cats, despised mutton and beef bones through the whole month of October, they were given such a surfeit of goose intestines.

To ensure that every goose was well done, it was boiled the day before, and then roasted on the day of the fair; and goose broth—the water in which the geese had been boiled—was to be had for the asking by all the beggars, and poor, and sick in and round Wadebridge, but was despised and scouted by them, and so poured away for the pigs by those who kept pigs, and down the gutters by those who had none.

When the fair was over and the town relapsed into its normal stillness, and the smoke of the fires and the fumes of the roast lifted and were wafted away, then the Wadebridgians settled down to pies of gizzard and feet, and hashes of neck and doctor's nose which lasted a week, and

soup of giblet and relics of stuffing becoming weaker and less savoury day after day.

The reader may suppose that we are about to describe to him the dinners themselves on Old Michaelmas Day to revive in him the savoury recollections of many a sage-and-oniony and unctuous moment in his past: spots in life's pilgrimage on which it is a pleasure to look back, moments which were greasy but guileless. We are not going to do so.

At one table sat Squire Gaverock with his sister and brother-in-law and young Anthony; at the other the two young ladies with Gerans and Dennis. Old Gaverock carved his goose with experience, and helped himself to the flap of fat skin that covered the stuffing. Gerans squirted the gravy over the table, and in the faces of his companions, in his clumsy attempts to find the joints of the wings and legs. The old people had done their first helping before the young had begun their hacked and shapeless morsels. But time was made, like geese, to be killed. The afternoon was before them in which, after a protracted, merry meal, to stroll about the town and look at the shows and shops.

Young Anthony Loveys was a tall, heavy young man, into whose constitution goose seemed to have largely entered. He spoke very little, ate hungrily, was blank in face, red complexioned, and puffy, with a rough skin. He could ride, and liked dogs; he drank readily with his father and uncle, but never became uproarious. By age he belonged to the younger party, but that party was not sorry to be without him at their table, where he would have contributed nothing to their entertainment.

To the goose succeeded apple tart with clotted cream; then cheese and celery, and a bottle of port. After that, the young people were at liberty to leave the table: but their elders, and the heavy Anthony junior, remained at theirs talking, arguing, eating apples, and drinking more wine. Mrs. Loveys, indeed, protested that she had shopping to do in the town, and during her absence a neighbour, also dining that day on goose at the 'Lion's Head,' took her place.

The morning had been bright and sunny, with a pleasant air from the sea. When the diners turned out

into the street and square, they saw that a change in the weather had taken place. The wind had veered round to the north-east, had risen, and was bitterly cold. Heavy clouds were massed on the horizon and were rolling over and obscuring the sky. Some persons in the market-place said they had heard thunder; others said they had seen lightning, but had heard no thunder.

The delay in getting dinner, the insufficiency of waiters, and the general reluctance to break up from table, had brought the afternoon to half past three before the inn was left for the sight-seeing and shopping. The fairing was done with shivers. The owners of stalls were withdrawing their wares under cover; darkness was settling prematurely over the town. Hark! A distant moan and then roar. In another minute down came snow in a blinding shower, whirled over Wadebridge and the valley of the Camel by a furious icy gale.

'Come here! Come in here!' exclaimed Dennis Penhalligan, drawing the ladies under a booth out of the snow and wind. The booth was a hut of rough boards.

There were various wares exposed on the counter of the booth where they stood, but the party did not regard them; they stood looking at the snow as it swept past.

The street was full of flying people, farmers and peasants who had come in for the day to enjoy the fair and eat goose, and buy at the stalls. Mothers had dolls, and little windmills, and wooden horses for their children, and as they ran they dropped some of these treasures. There rose much laughing and many shouts. The storm increased the merriment.

'Do look there!' exclaimed Rose; 'see that odd man!' She pointed to the figure of a pedlar who passed carrying a pack slung before him, a long basket covered with tarpaulin. The man was fantastically dressed, with a feather in his hair, and no cap on his head. He wore a long oil-skin coat. As he passed the wind swirled the snow about him, so that he seemed to walk in the midst of an eddy of revolving flakes that half obscured him.

'How odd!' said Rose. 'Do you see the fellow, Gerans?'

'Yes,' answered the young man. 'But what amuses me most is that old farmer with the packet of lemon drops;

the snow has melted the paper, and he is trailing the sweet things around him.'

'Now the man is gone,' said Rose.

'Come,' said Gerans, 'let us see whether there is anything in this stall that can attract us till the storm blows over.'

They turned and examined the wares. They consisted of old iron; there was nothing they could buy.

'A pity we have not come where there were bonbons and cakes,' said Gerans. 'I would treat you to the whole contents.'

'At all events,' said Loveday, 'we have got shelter from the snow.'

Dennis was excited and irritable. The wine he had drunk had heated his brain without warming his heart. He was jealous of Gerans' attentions to Rose, which were marked, and he resented being behoven to his rival for the feast. He was angry with himself for having accepted the invitation, and he was angry with Gerans for having invited him. When he detected Gerans saying something to Rose which made her laugh, he suspected that the joke was about himself, his poverty, his want of professional success, his ill-humour. The dark veins in his brow swelled, and his lips quivered so that he was forced to bite them to disguise his agitation. He could not quarrel with Gerans over the cups for which the latter had paid, but he would be glad of an occasion for a quarrel elsewhere than at the table where Gerans was host. The observant eye of Loveday was on him. He felt it, and resented that also. He knew that she read his heart, and he was angry with her—his best friend—for doing so. He would have hidden his ill humour, his envy, his hate, but he could not do so.

They turned to look again at the weather. As they did so, again the strange pedlar Rose had noticed came into sight, walking slowly against the storm. As he came up to the stall where the little party was clustered, he stood and turned and looked at them. His lips moved and he half opened his pack. They saw that he was deformed. He had not an ordinary hunch, but a something that protruded from the middle of his back in a strange peak. He was a singular-looking man, with long ragged black hair. A band was tied round his head, holding his hair in place,

and in this band were stuck a peacock's feather and a Cornish crystal. His features were bold, an aquiline nose, and arched, thick black brows. His complexion was coppery, his eyes were deep-sunken, and from the hollow sockets they gleamed with a mixture of appeal, provocation, insolence, and deference. He wore a glazed oilskin suit, very long, which he kept wrapping and flapping about him with his arms; beneath it the colour of a red waistcoat or jacket, they could not distinguish which, was visible when the waterproof fell apart. He wore long wading-boots.

He was followed by a white and liver-coloured dog. As he stood looking at the little party an involuntary shiver ran through them.

'I am cold,' said Rose. 'Let us move away from here. I do not mind the snow.'

'Let us go,' said Loveday to her brother. 'I have done all the fairing I care for.'

'That is, you have done none; for you have not had money to spend.'

'I have bought what little I need,' said Loveday, gently. 'After all, Dennis, we do not want much, and what is the use of buying what we can do without?'

The pedlar was gone. A rush, blinding and dense, of hail and snow mixed, went by, and with his head down against it, followed by his dog, went the man.

'Who is that queer man?' asked Rose.

'How can I tell?' answered Gerans. 'He is quite a stranger—some showman or mountebank.'

'His eye rested on me and made me feel colder than if I had been cut by a blast of east wind and snow.'

'Well, you will never see him again.'

'I wonder now,' said Rose, 'what he could have in that pack he carried before him. I have brought money in my pocket and have bought nothing.'

CHAPTER XV.

THE PEDLAR'S PACK.

'HALLOO! You in here, Rose? Loveday? What! the lads and the maidens out in the storm?'

The voice was that of old Gaverock.

'You here too, Anthony?'

The voice was that of old Loveys.

'Come along, we have ordered coffee,' shouted old Gaverock. 'Here's myself and the rest of us old folks come to look for you through the snow.'

Hender stood outside the booth. At the same moment the pedlar was again seen, now standing beside him, and his dog ran round the Squire. Old Gaverock turned and looked at the dog, then he fixed his eyes with a wide stare on the pedlar. He put his hand to his brow, drew it over his eyes, which had in them a startled expression, and his mouth fell open.

'What is this? Who are you? What is here?' he asked. 'Come away, Rose; come away, Miss Penhalligan. Gerans, we must be driving home.'

'Oh, uncle!' said Rose Trewhella, 'who is that strange man? We have seen him pass several times. What has he got in that pack he carries in front of him? Do go and ask him, Gerans. You, Guardie!'

'Come away,' said old Gaverock, with a tone full of uneasiness. 'This is not fit weather for you girls. Come away; we must be returning home.'

He was manifestly ill at ease. He kept his eyes fixed on the pedlar with something like alarm in them. Rose, with her perversity of nature, now wanted to stay. A few minutes before she had wished to leave. But old Gaverock would take no refusal; he would allow of no delay. He drew the girls away from the booth towards the inn.

Gerans remained behind and went up to the pedlar, who had placed his pack on the snow at his feet.

'Have you any wares in your pack,' he asked, 'wares that would interest the ladies? You are a stranger here, are you not?'

'I have wares.'

'Let me look at them.'

'No; the ladies must see, not you.'

'Then bring the pack to the inn. They will be there some minutes before leaving Wadebridge.'

The pedlar, without more ado, stooped and took up the box of wicker-work covered with black oilcloth. As he was unable to carry his pack slung behind him, because of the hump in his back, he carried it in front, slung round his neck, as a hurdy-gurdy player carries his instrument.

'I will show my pretty things,' he said, 'they are not for you, sir, nor for any of the gentlemen—only for the ladies.' Then he followed Gerans to the inn.

The party was all there in the long room, well lighted and hot, waiting for the horses and traps to be brought round. When the pedlar appeared with his basket and raised the lid, every one crowded up to look in, expecting to find needles, thimbles, thread, and tape. But what was their surprise to find that it contained nothing but roses! Roses at that time of the year—just now when hail and snow were driving about the house, when the winter storm was tearing every leaf off the trees and every flower from its stem! It was true that the blossoms were mostly those of monthly roses, that bloom up till Christmas; still, the sight of a basketful of them presented in a heated inn parlour to men laden with wine and spirits, and inclined to be uproarious, was incongruous. The roses were done up in little bunches: the pretty Bourbon, just introduced; the Noisette and the China roses; buds with leaves, and single flowers in full blow, with a little maiden-hair fern.

The men laughed; some scoffed. The ladies were delighted, and the young men eagerly bought bouquets for them. Probably the pedlar did a better trade in these perishable articles than he could have done with needles and threads.

'Guardie!' cried Rose, 'you must positively take home a very large bunch for dear aunt. You could bring her no fairing that would please her better.'

'My love,' said Mr. Loveys to his wife, 'choose your posy and command my purse.'

'I must give one to you, Miss Rose, and another to you, Miss Loveday,' said Gerans.

'It is carrying coals to Newcastle to offer roses to the Queen Rose—the Sanspareille,' said Dennis.

'Really, Mr. Dennis,' exclaimed Rose, laughing, 'your laboured compliments overwhelm me!'

'You will allow me as well as Gerans to offer you a posy?' he asked.

'I have two hands,' answered Rose gaily. 'I wish I had four, to carry a bunch in each.'

'Then pray choose.'

She thrust her hand into the basket, in among the flowers, and uttered a startled cry as she sharply withdrew it.

'What is the matter?' asked Loveday, standing up.

'Look! look!' exclaimed Rose. 'There is a toad among them, at the bottom, hidden by the flowers.'

'A toad! Impossible,' said Loveday, and put in her hand.

Rose grasped her wrist and drew her fingers away.

'Do not touch. I know there is; I felt it. You cannot see—the rose leaves hide it—but I had a glimpse of the beast; it spits—poison.'

Dennis laughed sarcastically, and shook the basket. Then there emerged from under the sweet and delicate flowers, a little round, glossy, brown object.

Rose cried out, and shrank back. Loveday recoiled also. Those crowding round the table shook it, and again the roses covered the object from their eyes. Whatever it was, it lay at the very bottom of the box.

'I know it is a toad?' said Rose vehemently. 'I touched its cold and clammy body, and it sent a shudder up my arm and a chill to my heart. Look! there—again.'

The pressure of hands on the table, the thrusting of men against its side eager to see for themselves, gave movement to the box; and for an instant a round brown object appeared above the rose leaves and then dipped under them again.

'What have you got there—in there, Hunchback?'

'Where?'

'There; under the roses, at the bottom of your pack?'

'Crushed roses, bruised rose-leaves. Nothing else, gentlemen, that I am aware of.'

'But beneath the roses?' asked Gerans.

'Nothing at all.'

'There! See! Peeping up again, above them.'

'This is the best way to ascertain,' said Dennis, and he turned the basket over on the table.

'My posies!—my flowers! you will spoil them!' cried the pedlar in dismay.

The heap of flowers lay strewn about, and among the beautiful pink and white blossoms lay a small double-barrelled pistol, with rusty barrels, but with a polished curled handle of brown mottled wood; so shaped that at the first glance, as it peeped out from among the roses, in the uncertain light of the candles, it might readily be taken for a reptile. Dennis Penhalligan took up the pistol and examined it. As he did so a black spider emerged from the bore and ran over his hand.

The pedlar was uneasy, and wanted to have the weapon returned to him. He put out his hand across the table, with the oilskin sleeve on it, and tried to grasp the handle and take it from Dennis, but the young man would not give it up. He turned the pistol over, rubbed the rust spots, and examined the lock; then he handed it to Squire Gaverock, who was clamouring to have a sight of the weapon.

'Pshaw!' exclaimed the old man. 'Do you call this a pistol? It is more fitted for ladies than men. It might knock over a sparrow, nothing bigger.' He tossed the pistol back. Another took it up and looked at it. So it was passed round.

'What do you want for it?' asked Mr. Loveys. 'It is worth the value of old iron, nothing more.'

'It is not mine, sir; it is not for sale. Give me my little pistol back. If I had thought to sell it, I would never have put it among flowers to rust.'

Dennis took hold of the weapon again.

'Pray mind what you are about,' said Gerans. 'It may be loaded; and you are pointing the barrel at me.'

'Will you sell it?' asked Penhalligan of the pedlar.

'You do not want the ugly plaything,' said his sister. 'What could you do with it?'

'Play with it, as it is a plaything,' answered the young surgeon. 'Practise with it on a rainy day; that is pleasant sport for an idle hour. I will have the pistol. What is your price, Hunchback?'

'Price!' repeated the pedlar. 'It is not for sale; it is worth nothing. To set it to rights will cost money; but the stock is good. I will take a guinea for the thing.'

Dennis opened his purse, then coloured to the roots of his hair. He had not a guinea in his purse.

'Loveday,' he said in a low tone, 'lend me a few shillings.'

'My dear Dennis, I have nothing.'

'Do you wish very much to have the pistol?' asked Rose.

Before he could reply, an ostler came in to say that Squire Gaverock's carriage and the gigs were ready.

'The storm has abated,' said Mrs. Loveys.

'Oh, look!' exclaimed Loveday, glancing through the window, 'the moon is shining, and the street is white with snow.'

'Hail, hail!' corrected Gerans. 'The moors will be glistening white as we drive home. I hope you have wraps, Miss Loveday; we shall meet the wind.'

In the bustle of preparation for the long drive home the pedlar was forgotten. He took the opportunity to refill his basket with the scattered flowers.

'Are you ready, Miss Rose?' asked the surgeon. 'My horse is impatient to be off.'

'Coming directly; I have forgotten something.'

Gerans and Loveday started. The sky had cleared—a few curdy clouds hung in it, like ice-floes in a dark cold sea; the ground everywhere was white and crackling under the feet of men and horses.

The barouche with the Squire was shut, but he shouted through the window for a drop of cordial all round to keep out the cold.

'Now, Mr. Dennis, I am at your service,' said Rose, coming out at the door; 'it is my fate, I believe, to be driven by you. Fortunate! for if you upset the trap, and dislocate my neck, you are at hand to set it again.' He helped her into his gig, and in another moment they were driving homewards in the wake of Gerans.

In a quarter of an hour they were out of the valley, on the high road. On each side was moor, treeless, white, shining in the moonlight; rocks seemed like lumps of coal, bushes as fibrous tufts black as soot.

'Gerans is out of sight,' said Rose.

'He has a better horse than mine. One such as myself must put up with a cob.'

'Do you know, Mr. Penhalligan, I shall not go to another Goose Fair; one is sufficient in a life's experience.'

'Nor I,' said he.

'I do not think it is quite an entertainment for a lady. One generation becomes more particular than another, I believe. Our successors will be too nice to sit at table in an inn with men drinking, and go to a booth to do their shopping. I felt all the time that dear Loveday was out of place. But Mrs. Loveys liked it, and Mrs. Gaverock always attended.'

'When the ladies decline to attend the gentlemen will hold aloof. Then it will be left to farmers and their wives to frequent the ordinary.'

'I believe Gerans would not care to go unless accustomed to do so.'

'Gerans!' laughed the surgeon; 'he goes because his father says "Go"; and he eats his goose because his father puts the roast bird under his nose. If he obeys his wife, when he gets one, as he obeys his father, his daily meal will be off humble pie.'

'You are too hard on poor Cousin Gerans,' said Rose, in an injured tone.

'I am but repeating what *you* have said. You likened him to a dancing dog the other evening. I saw dancing poodles to-day at the fair, and remembered your simile.'

Rose said nothing, but moved uneasily in her seat. So they drove on, neither speaking.

The white moorland, cold and shining, was stretched to the horizon on both sides. The road was indicated only by granite stones stuck on end, capped with snow, casting black shadows away from the moon. Everything around was in white and black; there was no colour in the dark sky aloft, no colour in the inky sea, caught in glimpses between the headlands; no colour in the tortured thorn-bushes and rare crippled ashes come upon here and there. They might have been driving over the surface of the full moon.

Presently Rose said, 'Let us have done with joking on that subject. It has become distasteful to me.'

'Perhaps the subject of your jokes has been changed,'

said Dennis bitterly, 'and I am the unhappy victim of your raillery. I saw you laughing with Gerans.'

Rose opened her eyes wide. 'We were not thinking or speaking of you.'

'The unfortunate and the unhappy are not worthy to be thought of by those on whom fate smiles.'

'Why do you speak like this, Mr. Penhalligan?' asked Rose. 'You are not unfortunate, and have no right to be unhappy. You are very highly blessed in having a sister such as Loveday, and ought to be serenely happy in such a sweet home as Nantsillan.'

'I may have ambitions beyond a sister to keep house for me, and a hired cottage, scantily furnished, with slate floors.'

'You are young, and have the world before you,' said Rose, cheerfully.

'The world before me!' repeated Dennis with a sneer. 'A world like this'—he swept the horizon with his whip—'cold, dead, shelterless, over which to go, with head down against the numbing wind, without a gleam of sunshine to cheer, a continual winter, moonlight, and beyond'—he pointed with his whip to the black Atlantic—'the unfathomed sea of Infinite Night. It is now as it was of old in Egypt. Some are in day, whilst others are immersed in a darkness from which there is no escape.'

He put his hand into his overcoat pocket for his kerchief, as his brow was wet.

'What is this?' he asked in surprise, as he drew something from it. Insensibly he tightened the rein and checked the horse. In his hand he held a small pistol, and the moon glinted on its polished stock and rusty barrel.

Rose laughed.

'This is the pistol I saw among the flowers,' he said.

'Accept it as a little present from me,' said Rose, coaxingly, but timidly. 'I saw you wished to have it, so stayed behind and bought it. Keep it for my sake.'

'And use it,' asked Dennis, 'should the necessity arise?'

CHAPTER XVI.

'PAS DE CHANCE.'

DENNIS was more than touched, he was deeply moved by the kindness of Rose. His blood rushed through his veins like lava streams. His hand shook as he held the reins.

'How good—how very good of you!' he said. 'I feel it the more because I am unused to receive kindnesses.'

He put the reins in her hand. 'You can drive for a minute whilst I look at your present. How I shall value it, words cannot tell; never, never will I part with it whilst I have life.'

He turned it over in the moonlight. The rust spots on it were like the marks—the blotches—on the back of a toad; the steel shone white in the moon's rays, flashed and became dark again. Dennis tried the cock.

'Don't span it,' said Rose; 'it may be loaded.'

Penhalligan laughed. 'Not likely. An old pistol, lying at the bottom of a basketful of roses. Loaded! Why should it be loaded?' He drew the trigger carelessly. At once a report followed, with a flash, and the bullet flew over the horse's head.

The beast, frightened at the discharge, bounded, kicked, and dashed forward. Before Dennis had time to wrest the reins from the hand of Rose, the horse had run the gig against one of the granite blocks by the roadside, and almost instantaneously the gig was over, and Dennis and Rose were in the road.

Penhalligan picked himself up. He was shaken, but not hurt.

Without a thought for his cob and trap, he ran to Rose, who lay on the snow motionless. In mad terror he picked her up, and spoke to her, but she made no answer.

'Rose! My dearest! Rose, for God's sake speak!'

He felt her arms, her feet; no bones were broken; the words she had said as he lifted her into the gig occurred to him—but her neck was not broken.

'Rose! Rose!' he cried, and clasped her in his arms. He knelt on the hail- and snow-covered ground and held

her to his heart. 'My God!' he said, 'has it come to this, that I have killed her I love best in the world?' He turned her face to the moonlight. How lovely it was! In his agony and passion he put his lips to her brow, her cheeks, her mouth. 'I may never have another chance of kissing her,' he said fiercely. As he held her to his heart it was as though he held her before a raging furnace, and that the heat it gave forth must restore her. He leaned his cheek to her mouth, to feel if she were breathing; he laid his hand on her heart to learn if it were beating. Then he put his fingers through his hair, and held his temples, which were bursting with the boiling, beating pulses of fire, and his eyes were lifted to the black sky, in which swam the chill, dead moon. 'My God!' he said in a voice that shook with passion, 'give her to me, and I will be good. I have not prayed for many years. I ask this one thing now. Give her to me!'

He felt her move in his arms.

'Dennis,' she said, 'what is it? What are you saying?'

'I am praying.'

'For me?'

'Yes—yes—yes, for you. Only for you.'

'What is the matter? Where am I? What has happened?' She disengaged herself from his embracing arm and tried to stand.

'We have been upset. You are hurt?'

She felt her head. 'No,' she said, 'not much. I lost all sense. Now I am right. What happened? Where is the gig? Did we fall out?'

Now he looked round.

'The gig is broken. There is my poor horse, fast by the head. The rein has caught in the axle, and the axle turning has brought his head up to the wheel.'

'Can we not go on?'

Penhalligan shook his head.

'But what is to be done? We cannot spend the night on the moor and sleep in the snow.'

'The chaise is coming on with Mr. Gaverock and the Loveys' party. The young cub can turn out on the box, and you will travel home, inside.'

'But you?'

Dennis shrugged his shoulders. 'What happens to me

is of little moment. I must release my cob and ride him home.'

'I am so sorry. It is all my fault.'

'I regret the accident for one thing only.

'What is that?'

'It deprives me of your company for the rest of the way.'

'That is nothing.'

'To me—everything.'

'Even the cutting wind and the snow cannot freeze compliments from your tongue.'

Dennis led her to a block of granite and seated her upon it. He collected the wraps and folded them round her; if she would have suffered him he would have taken off his overcoat and laid it in the snow for her feet to rest in, and folded it over them to keep them warm.

'Mr. Penhalligan, I cannot, I will not permit this; you are over-kind to me and over-cruel to yourself. See the poor horse. Do release him, and tell me the true condition of the gig.'

'The horse must wait until you are taken away from me by the chaise. Every moment now is to me most precious.'

'Really, Mr. Penhalligan, you turn me dizzy again. Do attend to the horse.'

'The carriage may be here at any moment.'

'Well—the sooner the better for me.'

'But not for me, Rose! no, not for me!' He stood before her in the white road, with his right hand on his brow; the moonlight was full on his face; she could see it working convulsively, as the face of a man might work who was on the rack. 'Rose! dear Rose! I have held you for one moment in my arms, to my heart. I confess all. I touched your lips with mine, and have drunk from them madness! I know what I am, a man with no fortune, and no luck, a disappointed, an unhappy man. And you are born to enjoy life, without a care or a sorrow, or occasion for thought. I look at you as Dives in torment gazed at Lazarus afar off, and feel but too cruelly that there is a gulf between; but it is a gulf which love can overleap. Dives!' he laughed, and his laugh was shrill and startling in the night. 'I liken myself to Dives. The time for Dives to be cast into hell and Lazarus to be translated to

heaven is over. Dives now mounts to Paradise, and the poor and the sick and the aching in heart and bone, and the sore of skin and racked of brain, toss and ache and moan in life and in eternity.' He spoke so fast, and in such a passion, his breath coming in gasps breaking his speech, that Rose could hardly catch what he said. She was frightened at his vehemence, and she put out her hand to lay it on his arm and pacify him. He mistook her meaning, and caught her hand in his.

'Rose! dear, dear Rose!' he cried, 'is it true that my long night is turning to day? That happiness is coming to me, even to me? Oh, Rose! you have never known or dreamed of love such as mine. I am not a poor, sleepy, cold-blooded creature such as Gerans. I love you. I have knelt here in the snow and stretched my hands to God and asked for you. I who never pray, I cannot endure life without you. Rose, speak to me. Tell me you hear what I say. Tell me that I am not to despair.' He clenched her hand so tightly in his that she cried out with pain. 'I have hurt you!' he said; 'that is the nature of my love. I hurt those I love.' He became cooler, and folded his arms.

Then the horse, driven desperate by the restraint of its head, began to kick furiously at the broken gig behind it.

'Do, Mr. Penhalligan—do look to the poor horse. Give me a minute to collect myself.'

He stood doubting whether to obey or not; then he saw, coming along the road from Camelford, two orange balls of light. The barouche was approaching.

'No,' he said firmly. 'I will have my answer now. It must be now. I must know whether I shall have you or lose you. On this moment everything hinges. I had not thought to speak, but the necessity drove me. I could not do other. Answer me.'

'Mr. Penhalligan,' began Rose, after a pause, with her eyes along the road, watching the approaching carriage lamps, and measuring the distance between them and the place where she sat, 'Mr. Penhalligan——'

'When you woke from your unconsciousness you called me Dennis,' he interrupted.

'Did I? That was because I was unconscious still—of what was fitting.'

'Answer me, Rose. There is but a moment more.'

He also looked round. The tramp of the horses in the snow and hail was audible.

'*You are too late,*' she said slowly, articulating each word with distinctness. 'Gerans asked me on my way to the Goose Fair, and I said Yes.'

Then he burst into a wild, fierce, ringing laugh, and clasped his hands over his head, and wrung them there.

'Pas de chance!' he cried—'Pas de chance! It is always so.'

'Halloa? who are there?' was shouted in their ears. The barouche was level with him; the driver had drawn up.

Rose ran to the door and knocked. Old Gaverock and Mr. Loveys were out directly.

'It was my doing, all my fault,' said Rose, half crying, half laughing, and nigh on hysterics. 'I would drive, and, having the reins, upset the gig.' She turned to the surgeon. 'Mr. Dennis, whatever you may say to the contrary, I alone am responsible. It was my fault solely.'

'Curse it!' exclaimed old Gaverock. 'Who cares whose fault it was? The gig is broken and will have to be mended. You, Missie, will come home with us now. Penhalligan, how will you manage?'

'I shall ride home.'

'Here!' shouted the Squire, 'give me the light.'

He took the carriage lamp and looked about in the snow. 'Is there anything lost? What is this? Here is a pistol! Golly! very like that we saw to-day in the pedlar's pack.'

'It is mine,' said Dennis, and he took it from the Squire's hand.

Just then a large white owl flew hooting to and fro over the carriage and the little group, flitting like a great ghost-moth or swaying like a pendulum. At the same time, from under the carriage ran the white spotted mongrel of the pedlar, and began to limp on three legs round the party, then to threw itself on its back as one dead, then to leap with all fours straight up into the air and dance on its hind legs.

'How comes this brute here?' asked Mr. Loveys. 'Why is it performing these antics here? To whom does it belong?'

Mr. Gaverock took the coachman's whip and lashed at

the dog, hit it, and the beast began to howl, then dashed under the carriage, and disappeared.

The moon passed behind a white curdy cloud, and formed in it a ghastly ring of tawny hue ; it was like a single great owl's eye staring down at them from its socket of radiating feathers.

Young Anthony, useful when anything touching horses had to be done, had gone with the coachman to Dennis's gig, and disengaged the cob, with much shouting to the frightened beast. The brute was hot and trembling, his rough coat standing out, matted with sweat, and the steam rose from him. Anthony junior patted his neck and uttered 'Wohs!' in his ear, which produced a soothing effect, whilst the coachman extricated the gig from the place where it was wedged.

'Her ain't so bad used but what her may be made to run,' said the driver, speaking of the gig. 'The splash-board be scatt (broken to pieces) and the axle be bent: but otherwise her's middling sound. But her must be drove slowly and with care.'

'Where are my flowers? Has anyone seen my beautiful roses? I must have my posies,' said Rose. 'Oh, Guardie! let me have the lamp. I want them so much.'

'Never mind the roses,' said old Gaverock. 'We must get on our way.'

'But I do mind them,' answered Rose, 'not only for their own beautiful sakes, but also for the sake of those who gave them to me.'

Dennis approached. He said nothing, but held out the bunches. He had found them in the snow.

'Oh, thank you again, Mr. Penhalligan,' said Rose, looking at him and smiling, but somewhat timid still. 'There is no end to the favours you do me. You recover me out of the snow, and will not suffer my sweet namesakes to lie and perish in it.'

'Are all the cloaks and wraps in?' asked Gaverock. 'Come, Rose, we cannot spend the night here.'

'Yes, Guardie, I believe so. I am ready.'

'Then get in yourself.'

She stepped into the chaise ; then, opening the window, put out her hand. 'Good-night, Mr. Dennis,' she said, in

her prettiest tones. 'You have overwhelmed me with kindness. I shall never forget this night.'

'Drive on,' said Gaverock.

Then the yellow glare—the little of colour there was in that waste of white and black—moved forward, and Dennis Penhalligan was left in the road looking after the carriage. Though steeped in his own trouble, he started as he noticed a figure, which he thought was that of the pedlar, crouched behind the carriage, clinging to the great springs. In the moonlight he could not make out the nature of the coat, but his doubt ceased when he saw the shadow of the dog pursuing the barouche. The white dog with spots was itself scarce distinguishable against the snow and stony ground, but its shadow was black and defined. Dennis clasped his hands and moaned.

'Would to God we had both been dashed against these stone posts, and the life crushed out of us! Always too late for luck! The prize is out of my reach. Healing, rest, happiness, are for others, not for me. Pas de chance! Pas de chance!'

CHAPTER XVII.

THE FEATHERSTONES.

When the hero of a novel falls overboard, is wrecked, or plunges off a cliff into the sea, unless he be produced within a few chapters with his nose eaten off by fish and his eyes pecked out by seagulls, the reader may be certain that he will turn up unhurt somewhere near the end of the book. Constantine Gaverock, it is true, is not our hero—indeed, we have no hero; but he is an important personage in our tale, and as we have not shown his bones in process of transformation into coral, nor his eyes into pearls, nor as undergoing any kind of sea-change, the reader may expect to see him again. Indeed, we gave the reader every reason to suppose that he would not be drowned, for we expressly stated that he was launched from the keel of the 'Mermaid,' with two stone jars lashed about him, from which the spirits had been emptied, and which were corked full of air. Now, anyone with a particle of intelligence must know that a man thus buoyed cannot sink.

Constantine did not sink. On the contrary, he floated like a bubble, and was driven by the waves against the black cutter which old Gaverock supposed to be that of the rover Featherstone. The men on board the vessel saved him, but not before he had been beaten against the side and was so stunned and bruised as to be unconscious that he was in safety.

Constantine did not recover consciousness till he was brought to land and had been in bed for three days. He did, indeed, occasionally open his eyes, when roused to take food, but he closed them again, and dropped off into sleep. His head had struck the side of the boat, and he was suffering from concussion of the brain. He dimly saw figures about his bed, and was aware that he was in bed, but he felt no interest to know who visited him, or where he was, or why he was there.

On the third day, he woke from his stupor and looked about him. He was in a strange room. He raised himself on his elbow for better inspection. The room was large, with coved ceiling. There was a fireplace in which a fire of sea-coal was burning; in the corner was a spinet. The sun was shining in through the window, and he could see through the latticed panes into a little court. Above the roof opposite were tree-tops, curled and leafless. He thought, on seeing this, 'I am somewhere near the coast.'

Whilst he was wondering and looking about him, the door opened, and a man of about thirty entered, very tall, grave, with dark hair and large hazel eyes; he was dressed in a dark suit, knee-breeches and blue worsted stockings, like a farmer.

'I am glad to find you better,' he said in a quiet, precise tone. 'I supposed you would recover consciousness to-day —if at all. The Lord be praised! I am glad, and I am thankful.'

'Not more than I,' said Constantine. 'But where the devil am I?'

'Hush!' said the man gravely. 'It is not through the agency of Satan that you are here; it is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.'

'I should like to know where I am, and how I came here,' said Constantine, He spoke with a raised tone, for he fancied that the man was slightly deaf; he fancied it

from the way in which he turned the side of his head to him when he spoke, and from the intent, earnest expression of his face, as he listened to catch what was said.

'You are at Marsland,' answered the man, 'you are our guest; our name is Featherstone—Featherstone of Marsland.' A slight colour rose to his face, and a look of annoyance crossed it. 'Unfortunately the name is known along the coast. If you come from these parts you may have heard it—not spoken of with honour. The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge. Of the Lord's mercies, however, we are not utterly destroyed for the iniquities of our parents; and perhaps, in His pity, He suffers the children to expiate by a blameless life, and by love and charity and prayer, for the sins of former generations.'

Constantine turned red and white. He was in the house of a man whose father or uncle, he knew not which, had been killed by his own father.

'You were out in the terrible storm which, I fear, sent many poor fellows to their last account,' Mr. Featherstone went on. 'Your boat and ours were close neighbours for some way; when yours capsized we picked you up. You were unconscious. But I must not speak to you more, newly restored. One thing only I ask. Put your hands together, as you cannot kneel, and consecrate to heaven your first returning thoughts.'

Then the grave man withdrew.

When he was gone, Constantine lay quiet, with his face to the wall, thinking. He was awkwardly situated. He had got into the house, of all others, he would least like to find himself in. Whereabouts he was he did not exactly know. Marsland was somewhere on the coast between Hartland and Padstow Point, he supposed, but he had never before heard the name. Whether it was in Cornwall or Devon he did not know. It certainly could be nowhere near his own home, or he would have heard of it. As for old Featherstone, whom his father had spiked, he was known all along the coast, and had his kitchens and cellars near every accessible bay, but he had never heard, that he remembered, where Featherstone's house was. He had been as ubiquitous as the Flying Dutchman.

Constantine could not think for long. His head was painful, and his thoughts began to wander when he tried to concentrate them.

Presently the door opened again, and a young lady entered, dressed in grave colours, but with a fresh and rosy face and pleasant, kindly expression. She had dark hair, and, what goes so charmingly with that, violet blue eyes. She had some needlework in her hands. She seated herself in the window and sewed. Constantine watched her. He thought her very pretty. There was a purity and innocence in her face which were more attractive than her beauty. Beautiful she properly was not, as her features were not regular, but her face was agreeable. The young man saw a likeness in her to the man, and concluded that she must be his sister, not his wife. His features were much more pronounced and regular than hers. He had a strongly characterised aquiline nose, dark eyebrows, and rather sunken eyes. She had not the same sort of nose, nor as heavy brows, yet there was an unmistakable family resemblance between them.

She saw that he was watching her, and looked round smiling.

'I am glad you are better,' she said, in a gentle voice with a Cornish intonation; 'we have been very anxious about you. We thought, if you did not rouse to-day, you would not rouse at all. And now, you must not talk, or trouble your poor head about anything you see or hear. Rest and be thankful. I am Juliot, Paul Featherstone's sister, and your nurse.'

'I am fond of music,' said Constantine. 'It would be the best medicine for me if you would play me something.' She threw down her needlework at once, and went to the spinet, opened it, and played 'All people that on earth do dwell.'

At the first notes, a rich deep bass voice rose from the court outside singing the psalm, and Juliot's sweet, untaught, but musical voice sang also.

When the psalm was done, Constantine said, 'I thank you. Can you sing me something else? I should like something of Mozart.'

'I don't know anything of his, though I believe he wrote masses,' said Juliot. 'I play mostly sacred music.

My brother does not care for any other. I can play you some of Tallis or Purcell.'

'Anything,' said Constantine; 'but it is not very lively; perhaps, however, it may be more soothing.'

'My brother Paul likes psalm tunes most of all,' she said, 'and so I play more psalm tunes than anything else. I can play and sing Jackson's "Te Deum" if you like, and "Angels ever bright and fair."'

'What sort of music do you like best, yourself?' asked Constantine.

'I!' exclaimed Juliot, modestly colouring—'I—oh I—I do not know. I never considered. Of course I like that which pleases Paul best.'

'Does Mr. Featherstone object to your playing other than sacred music?'

'Oh no,' answered Juliot frankly, turning her honest face, and looking full at him out of her honest violet eyes, 'not at all. Paul is not a Methodist. I can play gavottes and quadrilles; and he and I sing together Jackson's pretty duet, "Time has not thinned my flowing hair." But he says that no music speaks to his heart like the old psalm tunes. Whenever Paul is fretted about anything, or has met with annoyance, I can always bring his gentle, sweet look back on his dear face with a psalm tune. When I saw that you were awake and looking a little troubled, I played the "Old Hundredth." I thought it would have the same effect on you as it does on my brother.'

'Is he married?' asked Constantine.

'Paul married!' echoed Juliot, and laughed. 'I cannot fancy him with a wife. And yet she would be a happy woman who won him, for Paul is the gentlest of men. The animals all love him. When he goes out on the cliffs, the gulls come round him in flights; and the sheep run to him when he appears on the common. As for the cows and horses—I am sure they adore him. I never hurt an animal, that I know, but they will not come to me as they go to Paul. The people round look on him as some one quite out of the ordinary, and come to him to have their arms and legs struck when suffering from swellings, and they bring him kerchiefs to bless, when any one has cut himself in the hay or corn field, that he may stop the flow of blood.'

'But—does this succeed?'

'Of course it does. Paul would not do it else. But he is very humble, and it pains him if anyone says it is because he is so good. *I* think that is the reason. He thinks that it is given him that he may do a little good to make up for the great wrongs done to men, and the sins committed in the sight of God, by our uncle—Red Featherstone.'

'I do not know quite where I am. Am I in Devon, or Cornwall, or in Wales?'

'You are in Devon. This is the parish of Welcombe. Our little Marsland brook runs down to the sea and divides the counties and parish from Morwenstowe. We have a little harbour: it is the only bay in which in decent weather a boat may run in and be safe. We keep a boat there. Paul is very particular about his boat. It is the old cutter that our uncle had. When there is a storm, my brother is on the look-out to help distressed vessels, and save those who are in peril. Paul is so good. He was returning from Hayle, where he had some business, when he saved you, not so far out from Black Rock, where the people say the spirit of our poor uncle is engaged weaving ropes of sand. At one time we heard a great many stories about what went on in his time; of his wickednesses, of how he wrecked vessels, and murdered the crews when washed ashore, and of how he plundered on the coasts of France and Wales. But now we are told nothing; the people know that it distresses my brother to hear these tales. It is now a great many years since he was killed. If ever there was a case of murder, that was one—a man called Gaverock ran him through with an old spear whilst he sat in the sun on a rock warming himself. It was a treacherous and cruel act, though I admit my poor uncle deserved his death. People say he wilfully wrecked vessels, and if sailors and passengers swam ashore he killed them; but I cannot believe this; I think this an exaggeration. Do not talk to Paul about his uncle; he cannot endure it.'

Just then Paul Featherstone came in.

'You are not overstraining our patient's attention?' said he. 'Remember, he must be spared.'

'Paul, I have been telling him where he is—he did not quite understand.'

'You are in Marsland in Welcombe,' said Mr. Feather-

stone, 'and you will also find a Welcome in Marsland.' He turned to his sister. 'I am making a joke, Juliot.'

'So I hear. You are very humorous, Paul.'

'Will you bring up the beef broth for our friend?' said Paul Featherstone; 'I believe it is quite ready.'

'I hope my sister has not made you talk more than your strength can bear?' said Mr. Featherstone, addressing Constantine.

'Not at all; she has been speaking to me, and playing and singing for my pleasure.'

'Juliot is always ready to do a kindness. Her heart overflows with goodness. In Welcombe, near the church is a holy well to which people came in Catholic times for the blessed water that healed infirmities and cleared eyes of the scales that covered them. The parish takes its name from this well. It never fails. The limpid spring never diminishes, never runs dry, and all the way down to the sea, whither its waters run, the grass is green and flowers bloom. My sister Juliot's heart is a better holy well than that. It also never fails, and whithersoever its influence reaches it bears healing, strength, and beauty and love. I am glad you are here, to know Juliot. Do not raise your voice to speak to me. I can hear. I am not as deaf as you suppose.'

'I cannot sufficiently thank you for your kindness,' said Constantine.

'Oh, I do nothing. My sister thinks and cares for you. I am only her servant, and do what she designs. I am the hand that executes what her head and heart devise. I hope you will not think me wanting in courtesy if I ask your name.'

'Gaverock,' answered Constantine after a pause, and with some nervousness.

'Rock,' said Mr. Featherstone, who had not caught the full name. 'Now that is indeed curious, that the Rock should come to the Stone, whereas generally the stone comes from the rock. Our name,' he explained, 'is Feather-*stone*.'

Just then Juliot came in, bearing a bowl of soup on a tray.

'Sister,' said Paul, turning to her, 'our patient, whom by God's providence we have been able to help, is called

Rock. Mr. Rock—my sister, Miss Featherstone. Juliot, I have made a joke. I have said that now the rock has come to the stone instead of the stone proceeding from the rock. Do you follow me?'

'Oh, Paul, how clever, how humorous you are!'

CHAPTER XVIII.

MARSLAND.

Marsland House was built by William Atkyns in 1656, as a stone in the wall testifies. It is one of the most picturesque and delightful specimens of a small gentleman's house of the seventeenth century that we know. Not that it has architectural adornment. Of that it is absolutely free, but that it remains to this day perfectly untouched. It stands as it was when built, without an addition, and without a stone of the structure having been thrown down. An avenue leads to a little gatehouse that closes with strong oak doors. In this gatehouse lived the porter, with a peephole to command the avenue, and windows to light him, opening into the first court—quadrangle it is not, but an oblong court, before the face of the house. The entrance is from the east, and the face of the house is to the east, away from the sea. The north side of this court is closed by a high wall. On the south side is the wall of the garden, with a door in it; the ground slopes rapidly to the south into the glen of the Marsland brook, and the garden takes all the sun, and is screened from the sea-gales by a dense wood of beech. The most prominent feature in the façade is the immense hall chimney forming a buttress, one side of which is utilised as the wall of the porch. The front consists of several gables of irregular heights, charmingly picturesque. If we enter the porch, we pass through the house by a passage one side of which screens off the hall, and the other the kitchen and cellar and buttery. We then emerge upon the quadrangle of the mansion, into which the hall also looks, westward, and in which, on the north, are the drawing-room windows, securing by this arrangement shelter and sun. The west side is formed of

sundry domestic buildings, and the south side is occupied by the servants' apartments.

Marsland Coombe is the most beautiful on this portion of the north Cornish and Devon coast. It is deep, clothed with oak coppice, and opens on a lovely bay. But scarcely a tourist who visits the coast thinks of looking in on this gem of old English country life and architecture. Since visitors have frequented this coast, settlers from the metropolis and elsewhere have come, and have built mansions—such miracles of hideousness that the traveller may rub his eyes, and, looking from the modern to the ancient, ask whether, after all, we have progressed during the two hundred years since Marsland was built. At the present day, Marsland, like so many other mansions of the gentry of a century or two ago, is turned into a farmhouse, and no guide-book calls the attention of the tourist to its beauty.

At all times Marsland was out of the way. The old north coast road from Bideford to Stratton, which is as ancient as British times, runs along the watershed of the streams which empty after a brief course down the thousand coombes into the sea, and, on the other hand, of the Tamar and Torridge. This watershed is a long backbone of elevated moorland within sight of the sea. Between it and the ocean are numerous—innumerable—deeply cleft valleys, becoming deeper as they near the sea, without the intervening hills becoming lower. The consequence is that a road skirting the cliffs would be a road consisting of scramble and slide up and down hills as steep as mediæval high-pitched roofs. Let the reader look at the back of his hand, and he may imagine a road taken across his knuckles to represent the high road, and his fingers with the clefts between will well represent the conformation of the land between that road and the sea. His finger-ends accordingly figure for precipitous headlands standing out of the ocean. The ravine between his index finger of the left hand and the middle finger represents the Welcombe valley, near the head of which stands the little parish church. The fissure between the middle finger and the ring finger symbolises the Marsland glen, which divides the counties. Halfway between the knuckle of the hand and the finger-nail, on the slope to the south, lies old Marsland House. The valley

between the ring finger and the little finger is that of Morwenstowe, and the end of the ring finger is the splendid crag of Hennacliff, rising 450 feet sheer out of the waves. The high road traverses the bleak and barren moor, where the stiff clay soil refuses to yield anything but rushes and gorse, and this dreary country stretches away to the east, and in it rises the Tamar. On the other side the coombes are fertile, and, being sheltered by the folds of the hills, give pleasant pasture meadows and leafy coppices. To the present day there is no inn in either Welcombe or Morwenstowe, nothing to invite the traveller to diverge from the high road to visit these glens. At the time of which we write, some seventy years ago, this angle of coast was as little visited as Iceland, and those who dwelt in it were unknown beyond the moor side and road.

The Atkyns family, who, in the seventeenth century, owned the estate of Marsland, did not appear at the last heralds' visitation of Devon and Cornwall, in 1620, probably because they did not hear in their isolated nook that the heralds were holding inquisition as to who were gentle and entitled to bear arms and who were to be discounted as *ignobiles*. But though the Atkyns family did not then appear at Barnstaple on September 9, 1620, when the heralds held their court, there can be no question as to the antiquity and the gentility of the family.

But the Atkyns family went, as nine out of every ten old families have gone ; and at the time of which we are telling, and indeed for some hundred years before, Marsland had been in the hands of the Featherstones.

Should the tourist be induced by this account to diverge from the main road and visit Marsland, let him look in the side of the hedge of the lane descending into the coombe, and he will observe the entrance to one of Featherstone's kitchens, a vault, arched and walled with brick, filled in indeed, but still structurally uninjured and readily distinguishable. In it he hid his spoils ; the place was easily accessible from the house, but the goods were not stored in his house, lest on a domiciliary visit they should be found by the constables.

When Constantine was left to himself, he considered what had taken place. He was not sorry that his name had been mistaken. He would make no attempt to correct

the error into which Paul Featherstone had fallen. Why should he? It would do no good. It would only give annoyance. It might cause his expulsion from the house.

Constantine took the world as it went, very easily. He liked to be comfortable, and not to have much to do. He was averse to the roughness of his father's ways, and he was not sorry to be now away from home. Dennis Penhalligan had given him three days for communicating the fact of his marriage to his father. The time was now past, and no doubt the old man knew by this time, if he were alive, the secret that had been kept from him. Of his father's safety he was not, however, sure, and he resolved, without saying anything to his hosts, as soon as he was able, on going to Bude Haven and making inquiries.

Next day he was better and got up, but could not leave the room. He was surprisingly weak. He was amazed at himself, how his strength had gone in a few days. His head was still painful, especially when he exercised it, so that he was glad to have cold compresses applied. Juliot attended him, and was so kind, and earnest in her desire to relieve his pain, and to see him recovered, that he felt disposed to make the most of his weakness and suffering.

During the ensuing days he sat up longer than he had been able to do at first. He saw a good deal of Paul Featherstone, who took every opportunity of visiting him; but he saw most of Juliot, who brought her work to his room, and sat with him the greater part of the afternoon.

'You will not see Paul to-day,' she said once. 'He is gone over to Stanbury, which belongs to us. It came through my mother, and Paul has to go there two or three times a week. It tires him, as he must ride: there is no driving on these by-roads, and Paul cannot ride well, it hurts him. He received a slight injury when he was young, which makes it painful for him to ride, and it is too far for him to walk with ease, our hills are so steep. My mother was a Stanbury, and she brought the estate to us.'

'Does that, then, belong to your brother as well as Marsland?'

'It does and it does not. Properly it belongs to me, and Marsland is Paul's; but it does not matter—what is his is mine, and what is mine is his. There is no mine and thine between us.'

'But if he or you were to marry it could not go on like this.'

'I do not know. We have neither of us given a thought to that,' answered Juliot, blushing. 'It is so unlikely. We see nobody. We visit no one, and no one visits us. Paul cannot go far, as I have told you; he is not very strong, and it hurts him to ride. Besides, the ill-fame of our family through two or three generations has cast us into isolation. When Paul and I grew up we knew no one, and no visitors came to this house which bore so bad a name, and so we have lived to ourselves. We are very happy, and quite content, and want no change.'

'But would you not wish Paul to marry and give you a sister-in-law? You must need some lady friend to whom to open your heart.'

'If Paul were to marry—but the thought is so strange I cannot grasp it—I should love the wife he chose very dearly, for his sake, but I do not know that I want her. I keep no secrets from Paul, and Paul tells me everything that passes in his mind. I am sure you never, though you may have travelled very far, you never met with so beautiful and sincere a mind as that of Paul. He is so good. He is a little too trustful, if he has a fault; he believes that every one else is as good as himself.'

'But you will marry some day, and what about Stanbury then? And Paul, how would he like to have that cut off, after having managed it with Marsland so long?'

'Paul! Oh, Paul would always do what is right, and would not have a wish contrary to what he thought was right. Besides,' she said, going on with her needlework, hastily, 'the thing will never be. It is not possible.'

'What is Stanbury worth?'

Juliot laughed, and looked round at him frankly, with her pretty, deep violet eyes—so pretty under their long dark lashes. 'I do not know. I have not an idea. I do not suppose my brother even could tell you. It is a nice little property, and the Stanburys lived on it for many generations. They were not great people, like the Grenvilles, and Rolles, and Arundells, but a very long way behind. I suppose the property is much the same as this in value, but no one knows less about these matters or cares less than myself.'

'Why does not your brother put in a farmer at Stanbury?'

'He either does not like to let it, or cannot. You see, Stanbury never has been a farm—I mean it never has been let. My mother's family lived there from generation to generation, and Paul hardly likes to turn it into an ordinary farmhouse. Besides, I am not sure that he can let it on lease, lest I should marry—not that it is likely—in which case——' She did not finish the sentence, but got confused and red.

'I understand. Should you marry, you and your husband would go to Stanbury. I do not suppose Paul can let the place on lease.'

Nothing more was said for a few moments; Juliot sat with her needle in hand, looking out of the window, thinking. Presently she broke the silence with, 'I wish Paul had not to go there so much, it always over-tires him. He never complains, but his eyes become sunken in his face; then I know he is over-done, and has suffered. It does him good to be out of doors, and he has enough to occupy him here, in looking after Marsland Farm; but the journeys to Stanbury hurt him. I wish he would get some good, conscientious man to attend to the estate for him. He has had so much trouble with the caretakers he has put in. Some have turned out drunkards, others have been dishonest, and the last man has been in deep with the smugglers, and actually let them store away their run goods in the place. Paul was really angry about that. It takes a great deal to put him out, but that did annoy him, and no one about sympathised with his feelings, and thought he behaved very unjustly to the man, when he gave him notice of dismissal. As if Paul could be unjust!' She held up her head with a pretty pride. 'No one but I, his sister, know what it costs Paul to dismiss a man from his service. It costs him many wakeful nights. He turns the man's conduct over in his mind, and tries to find excuses for him, and he is over-ingenious in doing so. But even when he finds these excuses, he still knows when he must give dismissal, for he has to consider the example to others. I believe it gives him a heartache more than the man he turns away. I hear him sighing, when he is not conscious that anyone is near; and, indeed, he sighs involuntarily, without knowing it,

when I am present, and is reproaching himself for undue severity. I think a conscience may be over-tender.'

'I quite agree with you,' said Constantine. 'The hedgehog is sensible, it does not coil itself up with the prickles inwards. Now, shall we have some music?'

She put down her needlework instantly and went to the spinet.

'Do I hear Mr. Featherstone reading aloud in the evening?'

'Yes. He is fond of books, but we have not many. He is reading now Mr. Brooke's "Fool of Quality." Do you know it? My brother is very fond of the book. It is in six volumes. Sometimes he reads poetry, Crashaw and Vaughan, and George Herbert. If it would give you pleasure, he would come up here and read, and I would come also. He was afraid to offer it, lest it should be too much for your poor head. My brother wishes to do all in his power to make you happy and comfortable, and—the "Fool of Quality" is a mighty pleasant book. On holidays he reads Nelson's "Fasts and Festivals."'

CHAPTER XIX.

STANBURY.

When Constantine was thought sufficiently convalescent to come downstairs, Mr. Featherstone went to him in the morning, and laid some garments on a chair by the bed.

'Mr. Rock,' he said, 'you have conferred on my sister and me real favours as well as affording us great pleasure. You will not, I trust, shrink from extending your kindness to us.'

'I—what have I done?' asked Constantine, sitting up in bed. 'It is I who am the recipient, not the conferrer, of favours.'

'Mr. Rock,' said Paul Featherstone, 'to house the shipwrecked, to nurse the sick, to minister to those who need a helping hand through poverty, or weakness, or accident, is to my good sister and, secondarily, to me such a blessed privilege, that we cannot be satisfied till we have added to our pleasure that of clothing those who are de-

prived by disaster of their customary wardrobe. Whilst you have been confined to your bed, we have taken the liberty of calling in the village tailor, and he has fashioned you a suit out of some claret-coloured cloth I happened to have in the house. He had your suit in which you were wrecked as his pattern, and I believe you will find it a decent fit, though mayhap the colour of the stuff be not to your liking. As to your linen, Juliot has cared for that. You have seen her busy with her needle ; she has supplied you with what is necessary. Do not thank me,' said Paul Featherstone, holding up his hand, as he noticed that Constantine was about to speak ; 'it is we who have cause to thank a loving Providence which has put the opportunity into our hands. We live so quiet a life here, and see nothing of the world, that a visitor sent us is a friend given us, and, having few friends, it is a delight to us to help as best we can those whom God bestows on us.'

He bowed with old-fashioned courtesy and left the room. Constantine got up and dressed. The suit, though made by a village tailor, was well made ; it was after the cut of his garments got in Exeter. He stood before a glass and looked at himself in them. He was pleased with his appearance. He made a fine figure of a man. His illness gave a look of refinement to his face. He was a good-looking young fellow, and he was never more conscious of this than at the present moment. He put his hand into his pockets, and found in one a folded and sealed paper, addressed to himself, on opening which three bank-notes fell out, one for ten pounds and two for five. A present from Paul Featherstone, or a loan, according to Constantine's circumstances. Not a word accompanied the notes. If Constantine had means, he would repay the advance ; if he had not, Paul would never ask for the money—he was free to keep it.

'What nice, simple people these are !' said young Gaverock. 'They understand what a person wants, without forcing him to ask. This is what I consider good manners. I had to plague my father with my necessities before I got anything out of *him*.'

The moment Constantine's foot was heard on the landing, Paul and Juliot ran to his assistance. The staircase was steep, and they thought he might need support in

descending. Therefore, each gave him an arm, and he went down with his right hand resting on the arm of the sister and the left on that of the brother.

He noticed that both were flushed when they conducted him into the little low-ceiled hall. They were flushed with pleasure at getting their guest downstairs, and seeing him so much improved in health. They were like children, pleased with small matters, and pleased that others should be happy and well.

By the hearth was an armchair, and they led him to it; and when he was seated, Paul clasped his hand and wrung it, and said, 'I shall always remember this day. I am so glad—so glad!'

Tears came up into the deep violet eyes of Juliot, tears of sympathy and pleasure. She said nothing, but Constantine saw that her heart was with her brother's, full of happiness, because he was sufficiently recovered to come downstairs.

'Juliot,' said Paul, with a smile, 'we have now a *vested* interest in Mr. Rock.'

'Yes, quite.'

'That was a joke, Juliot.'

'You quite sparkle, Paul. You are so witty.'

'I am sorry to have to leave you, Mr. Rock, on such a joyful occasion,' said Mr. Featherstone, 'but I am obliged to go over to Stanbury. Perhaps, when you are well enough, in a week or two, you will accompany me. I have some annoyance there.'

'If I can be of any service to you, here or there, now or at any time, command me,' said Constantine; 'I am not ignorant of law.'

Paul shook his head. 'We have nothing to do with law here. I would rather suffer the extremity of injury than prosecute any one.'

'And I have had much experience in farm management.'

'That is another matter,' said Mr. Featherstone; 'and, indeed, therein you may do me great service. But of that we can talk at another time. I again apologise.' He bowed himself out. 'Juliot,' he said, in the door, 'you will entertain Mr. Rock in my absence, that the time hang not heavy on his hands.'

Constantine looked about the little hall with some

curiosity. It was very plain, with a slated floor; a little dull, as both windows looked into yards enclosed by high walls, east and west, and the sun was not shining into either. Indeed, the sun that day was not shining at all. A long oak table occupied the centre with peg holes at the end, showing that in former times it had served not only as a table at which to eat, but also as a shuffle-board on which to gamble. Over the mantelpiece was a picture, apparently a portrait, badly painted, in a black frame. It represented a man, at full length, but the size of the picture was small. Constantine looked at the painting and was struck by it. The man was represented in a red waistcoat and black velvet coat, and he had a white spotted dog at his side. He wore high boots, but instead of a cap had a strap round his head confining his thick black hair, and in the strap was stuck a peacock's feather, where the band was fastened by a sort of brooch with a white stone in it, probably a Cornish crystal. The features were pronounced —an eagle nose, and arched brows, with the eyes sunken under them. The mouth was hard and the jowl heavy.

Juliot noticed that Constantine's eyes were on the picture, and that it excited his interest.

'That,' she said, 'is the likeness of our uncle, the wicked Featherstone, who was killed by a man called Gaverock. He was so wicked that the parson would not bury him in consecrated ground and read the service over him; so he is laid just outside the wall. Paul thinks, and of course he is right, that the shadow of his evil influence hangs over the place and the family. He quotes Scripture to prove it; but I am sure of one thing, there is none of the sinful nature of our uncle in dear brother Paul, who is as good a man as old Featherstone the Rover was bad.'

'What a curious fashion for a head-dress!' said Constantine.

'Whether he wore that or not I cannot say. I dare be bound there are people in the place who could tell; but Paul does not speak about the old Rover, nor does he wish me to converse with them about him. The subject is painful to Paul. He feels it very much. I have thought —but I may be wrong—that the plume and the crystal may be a fancy of the painter to express the name, Feather-stone.'

'I see that your brother is like his uncle, except about the chin and mouth. He has the same nose, and eyes, and brow.'

'But nothing—nothing whatever in character.'

'Was that your uncle's spotted dog?'

'That—yes. The dog lay down on his grave, and never left it, would eat nothing, and died. So there must have been some goodness and kindness in the old Rover, or the dog would not have attached itself to him. When the dog died, it was buried beside its master—that is, a hole was made in the earth by his grave, and the brute was laid there.'

About a week after this, Paul Featherstone said to Constantine, 'Do you not think that a ride would be beneficial to your health, Mr. Rock? You are heartily welcome to the use of my cob, as much and as often as pleases you.'

'Thank you,' answered Constantine; 'I should like a ride greatly. If I can be of service to you at Stanbury, to take a message, or to see whether an order has been executed, command me.'

'Certainly,' said Paul; 'you can oblige me greatly. The roofs were badly used by the gale, and I sent a wagon for slates. The masons are there, and should have reslated where the roofs were ripped. The water has been kept out for the time with hurdles and straw.'

'I will go there to-day.'

'And,' continued Paul, 'you may inquire of old Carwithen if he has got work. He has acted as hind for me hitherto—that is, for my sister—Stanbury belongs to her—and I have had to dismiss him, but I allow him to remain till he finds a suitable situation. The old man has abused my confidence. I am sorry. I liked him. Ascertain for me whether he has heard of a place, and I will thank you.'

Constantine enjoyed his ride. The air was mild, the sun shone, and the sea sparkled. Lundy Isle was full in view, its granite cliffs white in the sunshine. The leafy copse-covered coombe basked in the last warm light of declining autumn. The leaves were russet as the bosom of a redbreast. On the high land the gorse still bloomed; its golden flowers were, however, sparse. In the hedgerows

the long glossy hart's-tongue ferns were unshrivelled by frost.

'I like this country,' said Constantine, looking round. 'It is more homelike than Towan. I could be very comfortable here. It is not quite so bleak as about Padstow, and the people don't seem so rugged as my father and his set.'

He passed Morwenstowe valley and church, and ascended the hill opposite. He inquired his way, and was directed to Stanbury. 'Bless my soul!' said Constantine, 'what an out-of-the-world corner one is in here! Why, one might spend a life here unknown to the rest of the world, and without hearing how the rest of the world fares. That is just the sort of life I should like.'

He arrived at last at the house: it was small and comfortable and unpretentious. The land about it seemed good. 'One might fare worse than on this estate,' said Constantine. Then, as a man approached, he asked, 'Are you Richard Carwithen?' The man was rough and old, very broad-shouldered, with haybands tied about his legs, below the knees. 'Ay,' answered he, 'at your service, Richard Carwithen; and you, sir, I reckon, be Mr. Rock, as we've heard of at Marsland. Will you come in and have a drop of something to keep the cold out?'

'Take the horse, please, and I will go round with you. The master has asked me to see if the repairs are done.'

'The master!' repeated Carwithen. 'Stanbury don't belong by rights to he! Stanbury belongs to the lady, and he who takes the lady takes Stanbury. More's the fool he who don't seize his chance while he may.' He looked at Constantine and laughed. Gaverock coloured to the roots of his hair.

'Has the gale done you much harm here?' asked he.

'Ripped off slates here and there, as a gale be like to,' answered Carwithen. 'Providence, that cares for sparrows, cares for slaters and shipwrights, and makes work for both; it tears the roofs away and sinks vessels with the same blast.'

'Were there many wrecks on the coast, that you have heard, in the last gale?' asked Constantine.

Carwithen shrugged his shoulders. 'Naught to signify,

he said. 'There was a boat washed ashore at Bude, the "Mermaid."'

'All hands lost?'

'The skipper came ashore all right.'

'Any more?'

'A schooner went to pieces in Widmouth—her name was the "Marianne"—just off Featherstone's Rock. I reckon that was the vessel in which you were. Bound for Bristol. All hands lost but you. That was the boat you was in, warn't it?'

Constantine paused. After a moment he answered, 'Yes.'

'I have not heard of more,' continued Carwithen; 'but that's not saying there were no more. Us don't get news fast here. I knowed a case of a vessel laden with copper, went to pieces in Tonacombe Cove, and the Morwenstowe farmers were still as mice about it till they'd brought up all the ore on donkeys' backs. The neighbours in Kilkhampton and Bude knew nothing about it till the bones were picked clean. That's our ways, hereabouts. We don't talk when we're eating.'

'How many acres are there in Stanbury?'

'About nine hundred, and some of the land first-rate. Come in, sir, and have a drop of comfort. You drank water enough when picked up, I reckon, not to want any of that. Come in, sir, and sit down.'

'Have you heard of another situation, Richard?' asked Constantine.

'No,' answered Carwithen roughly. 'Stone deaf on that side. I'm very comfortable here, and don't want to go. What is the sense, I ask you, of Squire Featherstone taking on, if I do lend a hand to the runners? I ain't against Scripture. Show me the passage that condemns smuggling, and opens the kingdom of Heaven to gaugers, and I submit. What is there wrong in smuggling? Nobody can say. It's the custom of the country. Wasn't Levi an exciseman, and called away, because it was not a fit occupation for an apostle? Do you mean to tell me that the sons of Zebedee owned a boat and went all about the sea and brought across nothing but fishes? It is not in human nature. It is not credible. I should have no respect for them if they were such fools. Come in, sir. I'll tell you the truth of the

matter. Master is a very good man, and great in Scripture. So am I, and because he can't bring down a great text on my head and floor me touching smuggling, he's so put out, he wants to be rid of me. That is the sense of the matter.' He stopped in the door, and turned again to address Gaverock. 'Now, look you here, Mr. Rock. Them two is a pair of innocents. Stanbury, and with it as sweet a turtle-dove as ever were hatched, are to be had for the asking, and the man who gets Stanbury will know better than show Richard Carwithen the door, and object to a keg of brandy, real cognac, left now and again at his doorstep.'

After that visit to Stanbury, Constantine rode back in a meditative mood. 'What a fool I have made of myself!' was the burden of his reflections.

On reaching Marsland he was met by Paul Featherstone.

'Rock,' said the Squire, 'my sister and I have been considering during your absence. We want to ask of you a favour. I am not able to attend to Stanbury as I ought. Would it be possible for me to persuade you to spend the winter with us, and to look after the farm for me?—that is, for Juliot—Stanbury is hers. I need hardly say——' He hesitated, and patted the horse's neck, and looked at the mane. 'We will not ask you to give us your services gratuitously. We will try to make it up to you—but it would be doing me a real kindness, and Juliot a great service.'

'I shall be most happy,' answered Constantine; 'I have no ties—anywhere.'

CHAPTER XX.

A TEMPTATION.

Constantine Gaverock settled himself to his satisfaction into the situation offered him. He knew from the nature of the man with whom he had to deal that he would be treated with honour and liberality, though no terms were agreed on between them. Paul, indeed, with delicacy, shrank from the mention of money. He knew that Constantine was a gentleman, and with a gentleman money

transactions are necessarily awkward to conduct, to spare the feelings on both sides. Constantine was far less sensitive on this point than he was credited with being by Paul Featherstone, and he would rather have been told the amount of his salary than be left to conjecture what it might be.

Constantine had that easy-going temperament which made him adapt himself readily to the place where he was. There were few positions into which he could not accommodate himself, except such as exacted energy and resolution. He liked to waste his day in rambling about the Marsland Farm with Featherstone, riding over to Stanbury to smoke a pipe and drink grog with Carwithen, play on the spinet, and sing with Juliot, and read aloud, or join a game of cribbage in the evening. Scott's novels were then appearing. 'Waverley' had attracted attention; it was quickly followed by 'Guy Mannering' and the 'Antiquary.' Paul Featherstone was not narrow in his reading; he preferred a religious book, as he preferred sacred music, because both appealed to the deep feelings of his soul; but light literature and opera music were not condemned by him. 'Waverley' was procured, and read aloud by Constantine, and both Paul and his sister were so delighted with it that 'Guy Mannering' was purchased for evening reading in like manner.

The days grew shorter and the evenings longer. Very easy days for Constantine, very pleasant evenings for all. Young Gaverock thought of the office of Mr. Nankivel at Exeter, the tedious work of engrossing he had done there, seated on a high stool in a dreary office with the window looking into a back yard to the north against a bit of the old crumbling red sandstone city wall. How monotonous that life had been! How much better off he was at Marsland! At Exeter he was under a master. At Marsland he was his own master.

He looked about him at Stanbury, riding thither on Paul's cob. He was fond of horse exercise. At Exeter he had not a chance of getting astride of a horse. In the office his hours were from nine to twelve, and from one to five. Here he regulated his work—such as it was—according to his own convenience.

Constantine was not an exacting man. He was not

restless by nature, craving for change, wanting excitement. He was happy to be left alone, to spend his days in a sleepy, slow manner, and amuse himself with small matters.

He liked a talk with Carwithen, and so persuaded Featherstone, who was ready to be persuaded, that the old man was prepared to abandon his intercourse with the smugglers.

Carwithen never lost an opportunity of urging Constantine to secure for himself the estate over which he was now but a paid overseer.

Gaverock shook his head and made no answer.

'I shouldn't like to be turned out of this nest, I confess,' mused he; 'so comfortably lined with down, so little to do in it but turn about from side to side and open my mouth to receive my worms.'

One day—it was a Sunday—Constantine was walking with Paul Featherstone from the church. They came to a well, rudely built up, slabbed over with great granite stones, with a gable of solid stepped masonry built up on the horizontal covering slabs.

'By the way, Mr. Rock,' said Featherstone, 'it occurs to me that we have not been told your Christian name. I ask in no spirit of inquisitiveness, but in one of friendliness. Here, when we know and esteem a man, we cease to call him by his surname alone, we call him by both his names.'

'My name,' answered Constantine, 'is John.' He spoke the truth, he was baptized John Constantine. But he did not speak the whole truth.

'Then,' said Featherstone, 'you will suffer us to call you John Rock.'

They were standing by the Holy Well.

'This,' said Constantine, looking down into the water to conceal his face, and speaking so as to change the subject—'this, I presume, is the well of which you spoke to me, as resembling the heart of your sister.'

As he spoke he put his walking-stick into the pool to measure its depth, and he played with it, stirring up the sediment. Paul caught his hand.

'For God's sake,' said Featherstone hastily, 'do not that. The saying here is, "Who troubles the spring, troubles his soul."'

'The turbidness will soon settle,' said Constantine.

'In the well—yes. In you?—you know best. I tell you only what the people here say. That which is by nature placid soon casts down what clouds it—that which is not as clear takes long to disperse its cloud.'

They walked on, talking. Paul Featherstone was restrained in his manner. Something was on his mind which he desired to say and yet dreaded to utter.

As they neared Marsland he became agitated. He stood still, and laid his hand on the arm of Constantine.

'I wish to communicate something to you,' he said; 'but I must ask beforehand that you will do me justice to believe I speak with the best intentions.' He paused, and Constantine bowed. His heart failed him. Was Paul about to rebuke him, and bid him depart; to tell him he needed his services no longer?

'Mr. John Rock,' said Paul Featherstone, 'we have enjoyed your society during the few months you have been with us, and we are in dread of losing you. I think that I can assure myself that you have been happy at Marsland.' Constantine bowed again. 'I cannot be deceived in what I have seen,' he continued. 'I believe that my sister likes your presence here, as much—even more than myself. We unite in desiring that you will remain. I wish above all things to secure my dear sister's happiness. If—as I almost hope—you are not indifferent to her—and I am sure she is not indifferent to you—why should you not remain here permanently? Excuse me speaking: I thought some modest shrinking on your part might restrain your tongue. For that reason I speak. If I am mistaken, it matters not. Juliot has no idea that I have divined her feelings and am revealing them to you. She shall never know. But if this regard be reciprocal—if——'

Constantine clasped his hand and pressed it, almost wrung it. His emotions, conflicting, tumultuous, would not allow him to speak.

'Your hand tells me I am right,' said Paul.

Constantine did not say No. The temptation came to him—from the best of men, and he yielded. The purest of wells was to be troubled by his base hand.

CHAPTER XXI.

SPRINGTIME.

A YEAR and a half had elapsed—to be exact, nineteen months—since the snowy Goose Fair. Spring had come and was passing into summer. The trees had put forth their green leaves, tender and fresh, and the rushing salty blast from the sea had shrivelled them up and turned them black. Only those protected by shelter had survived. In the dingles, the coombes, under the hedges, the glistening pennywort leaves had spread, the white saxifrage spikes of flowers had shot up, the primroses had opened, laughed and faded, and now the stately foxglove was everywhere tossing its pink bells.

The garden of Towan was not a snuggery in which the flowers could flourish, but the glen of Nantsillan was overrun with them ; plants that had languished at Towan, and had been cast forth, had found their way to the sheltered glen, and run wild there—blue navelwort, pink fumitory, and yellow horn poppy. About Towan the gulls screamed, and the magpies chattered, and the peewits piped, but down in the sheltered glen of Nantsillan thrushes and blackbirds sang and finches cheeped and chirruped.

The sea had thrown aside its winter grey trimmed with white and put on azure and spangles, and the winds exchanged their wail for a plaintive song.

Joyous with summer triumph that coast could never be, with its tortured trees and scanty vegetation, that fought the winds, a guerilla warfare of ambushes. But it could be pleasant, always with an under-note of melancholy in its gaiety.

A change has taken place in Towan since we were last there. Mrs. Gaverock is better, but will never recover her former vigour. When old people descend the scale, they go down, not by steps but by stages. The loss of Constantine had broken her. She was so far recovered that she could attend to some of the little matters that needed attention in the house, but she was delicate and weak, and obliged to rest in her own room much during the day.

Dennis Penhalligan came to see her every week and administer medicines to enable her to regain something of her lost strength.

Old Squire Gaverock had not suffered from his exposure in the storm. If it had done anything to him it had toughened and roughened him. Tough and rough he had been before : he was now, perhaps, even more domineering, exacting, and boisterous than previously. He had a new ambition, now that Constantine was lost, and this ambition made him proud and headstrong and resolute to accomplish it. Gerans had married Rose, and they were now away on their honeymoon. The old man was elate. Rose's money would come to the family head, and the estate of Towan might be considerably extended.

'We'll build up the paddock wall again, and have some deer in it once more. We will, by Golly ! ' he said.

He had despatched Gerans to Truro, on his honeymoon, to look about the house property there of Rose, and see whether it could be disposed of to advantage. There was a tin mine in Kenwyn on her land, bringing in royalties. Gerans was to inquire into the condition of this mine, and take advice with the Truro solicitor whether to sell the land or keep it for a few years. Old Gaverock had no idea of business. He kept no accounts. When he had money in his pocket he spent it ; he did not waste it—throw it away—but he spent it, and when he had no money he lived without. He could kill his own sheep and bullocks when he wanted meat ; he had his own dairy. He grew his own corn. He could live on the produce of his farm till next court day and the rents came in again to flush his limp purse. He was now somewhat troubled with his responsibility for Rose. He received her rents, and muddled her money with his own. Sometimes he had not change in his drawer where he kept his cash, then he borrowed the change from the drawer where he kept Rose's money, and then forgot what he had borrowed, and put back sometimes more, sometimes less. His intention was to be honest in his dealing with the trust, but he was by education unfitted to undertake one. He had reckoned on the help of Constantine, who, having been given a business training, would be able to disentangle the affairs ; but Constantine was dead, and the tangle became more confused. Gerans was of no

use to him. Gerans was reared in the same want of system as himself. The old man became uneasy in his conscience. He did not wish to do wrong, and he did not know how he stood with regard to the trust. So he asked the help of Penhalligan.

Dennis had a clear head, and was business-like. He came up continually to Towan to see Mrs. Gaverock—which was nonsense—old women can no more be patched up than old cracked crockery; but he might be of service in looking into the trust, in arranging the figures, and in advising about the sale. Gaverock had the idea that lawyers were all rogues, and that if he consulted a lawyer he would be given rascally advice. 'One lawyer shovels into the pocket of the other,' he said, 'as one hand washes the other hand. But Penhalligan is a doctor, not a lawyer, so he may be able to give an unbiassed opinion.' As he regarded all lawyers to be rogues, he considered all doctors to be humbugs, as far as their profession affected them—that is, he considered law to be rascality and medicine quackery; but a lawyer or a doctor, taken independently of his profession, might be an honest man. If he were himself unwell, he would not think of calling in a surgeon; he would ask the opinion of a non-professional, because more likely from the latter to get an unprejudiced opinion. A doctor would protract his illness to extract a larger fee. By degrees old Gaverock came to regard Dennis with respect. He found that he was quite able to see his way through legal documents, and to sift and sort debit from credit entries.

'What is the sense of writing "Debtor" there?' said Gaverock, pointing to the head of an account-book. 'I pay my way. It is insulting. You'll be putting me down as bankrupt next. Besides, you are setting down there things I have paid. You may scribble them there if you please, but you won't force me to pay them again.'

With his mind alive to his own incapacity, and with a keen suspicion that the solicitors at Truro were not to be trusted, he was ready to accept advice from Dennis and submit to his opinion in a way he had done to no one else. Dennis Penhalligan had a peremptory, decided manner, and this exactly suited Gaverock. The old Squire readily submitted to be guided through a quagmire in which at every step he took he sank, when he felt that the hand extended

to him was that of a man who knew where he was treading. Although he grumbled at Doctor Sawbones giving himself airs, yet he secretly approved of the tone he assumed, and blindly submitted to his advice. Gerans was surprised and Rose annoyed at the influence gained over old Gaverock by the young doctor. The former was unsuspicious of the attachment of Dennis for Miss Trewhella, and the latter was too prudent to waken his jealousy by adverting to it. Rose was annoyed at the influence gained over Mr. Gaverock, because she considered, not without reason, that Dennis was taking a place in the counsels of the family that properly belonged to Gerans, that he was advising and directing concerning her property instead of the man who was shortly to be her husband. Involuntarily, she contrasted Gerans' ignorance with the knowledge of Dennis, the promptitude and intelligence of the latter with the procrastination and stupidity of the former. Gerans was good-natured and easy-going; it never occurred to him to oppose his father; if he formed a contrary opinion, he allowed the old man to override him, and trample it down, scornfully, whereas if Dennis Penhalligan expressed an opinion the Squire submitted at once.

'Gerans,' said she, one day, pouting and peevish, 'why do you allow Mr. Penhalligan to supplant you as your father's adviser? He is listened to, and no ear is turned to you. He directs and is obeyed; you express a wish and are ignored.'

'My dear Rose, I know nothing about business. Dennis is a very good fellow, has plenty of brains, and is invaluable. If I were to meddle I should muddle.'

'But your father ought to pay attention to your wishes, and not listen to Dennis Penhalligan.'

'What! attend to my advice when I am as ignorant of these matters as a babe!'

'Yes, whether for right or wrong, for good or evil, your opinion should be deferred to.'

'I don't see that, Rose,' said Gerans, good-humouredly.

'I am not at all convinced that Penhalligan's advice is for the best,' urged Rose.

'There we differ. Of course he advises for our welfare. We are friends. He likes you and he likes me.'

Rose's cheek flushed, and a light quivered in her eye.

She was tempted to tell him of Dennis's proposal on the night of the Goose Fair, but her better judgment prevailed. She might have done so without exciting jealousy and dislike of his rival in the heart of Gerans. Gerans was so perfectly truthful, right-minded, and good-hearted, that he would have pitied Dennis, not borne him ill-will; he would not have suspected that he continued to harbour a hopeless passion for Rose and to nourish bitter feelings against himself.

For some time before the marriage Rose Trewhella was not in an amiable mood. She was fond of Gerans, but impatient of his placidity and angry at his submissiveness to his father. She saw all his weaknesses, she liked him, but did not love him with all her heart, and she caught herself contrasting him with Dennis, and asking herself which was the better man of the two—better, not as to the qualities of the heart, but of the mind. A little corroding contempt for the easy good-humour of Gerans was seated, like a 'worm i' the bud,' very near her heart. To Dennis she could look up, on him she could lean, he was strong and tall; but at Gerans she must laugh or curl her lip, he was so small and weak where Dennis was great and strong. She was angry with herself for drawing this contrast, because she really liked Gerans and she had no spark of affection for Dennis. Then she thought of Old Michaelmas Day—of her drive with Gerans to Wadebridge, and his proposal; she thought how broad and red he had seemed seated by her in the gig with his greatcoat on and a thick white belcher over his chin, how he had fidgeted over his proposal, and made it clumsily, in a prosaic manner, whilst blowing his nose in a great orange pocket-handkerchief spotted white. She would always associate that most eventful moment of her life with the great yellow bandana kerchief and the white woollen belcher. There had been no passion in his voice; he had been like one labouring to get rid of an irksome duty, great shy booby that he was. Then—on the way home, how different! What fire, what rage, what romance, in the declaration of Dennis! She remembered how she had recovered consciousness in his arms, against his furiously beating heart. She recalled his quivering face, his frantic words, his vehement appeal, his despair. Did Gerans love her? She could not tell. He

showed no tokens of passion. Did Dennis love her? Of his love there could be no question. She was irritated at the contrast.

'Gerans,' said she, one day, after she had been thinking about this, 'tell me truly, on your honour, what I desire to know of you.'

'Of course I will, Rose—I keep no secrets from you.'

'Tell me: before you started on Goose Fair day, did your father order you to propose on the road?'

'*Order!* No, Rose—not exactly that. He *recommended* me to speak to you.'

'That is enough,' she said, and ran to her room, where she burst into tears. She sulked for a week after that avowal. 'He is, indeed, like a well-trained poodle,' she said. 'Never mind, as soon as we are married, I will insist on his taking his own course, and the old man must give way. If he will not, I will not remain at Towan; I shall make Gerans come with me to Truro, and there we can settle, and be masters in our own house.'

Whilst Gerans and Rose were away on their honeymoon trip to Truro, Squire Gaverock saw more of Dennis than before. His presence had become a necessity to him. Loveday had not been easy at the frequent visits of her brother to Towan before the marriage. She knew the state of his heart, and she thought that it could conduce to no good that he should meet Rose so often. She saw that every visit made him miserable and gloomy. She heard him pace his room at night and sigh. She noticed how much more worn and thin his face became, and how the lines, hard and bitter, about his mouth deepened. Dennis was becoming irritable towards her as well. He thought she watched him, and he thought right; he did not value the tender love that prompted her to observe him; he regarded her attention as intrusive and inquisitive. He became silent and reserved with her, sometimes he even lost his temper, and spoke roughly to her. Then her eyes filled with tears, and she withdrew, but said nothing, knowing that it was best to leave him alone. She was unaware that he had spoken his heart's secret to Rose; she saw that Rose's engagement was preying on his mind and heart. She tried to hide from him that she saw the trouble he was in, and that she was watchful of him, yet her deep

sympathy must express itself, if not by word, at least by act of love; and when he noticed that she saw and pitied his sufferings, he was offended and resented it.

At Christmas he had met with disappointment about his bills. Several were unpaid; payment was delayed, and he was pressed for money to meet certain debts he had contracted for groceries, and drugs, and drapery. He could not pay till he had received his dues, and if he were importunate for his money he might lose his patients. This also helped to fret his temper and make him more despondent in his view of life.

Whilst he was thus troubled, old Gaverock called him in to help him in the management of Rose Trewhella's property. He had loved Rose without any mercenary ideas in his head; but, as he went through the accounts, and examined into her affairs, previous to the marriage, for the drawing up of the settlement, it was forced on him—how he would have been relieved of his embarrassments if only he could have secured the hand of the heiress.

'Take from him the talent, and give it to him that hath ten,' muttered Dennis one day; 'that is the order of the world's government. This world is a school, in which every good thing goes to the favourites, and certain poor boys get only impositions and blows. I have but one luxury left me, one friend dear to my heart, my last, my only consolation. From that I shall be parted.' He set his teeth, and his eyes glared fiercely. 'That will be taken from me, because I am to be utterly badgered, and goaded to madness. My piano—I shall have to sell that, if I can find a purchaser in this desolate land. My piano—my mother's piano! No more Beethoven, no more Mozart and Haydn!' He clenched his nervous fingers behind his back, and his chin sank on his breast. 'Some men are born under a star, and the star may disappear for awhile but returns in the sky. I was born under a meteor, whose course is downward, a flare, a few sparks, and then—nothing.'

CHAPTER XXII.

RETURN.

'I EXPECT them back to-day,' said old Gaverock; 'and high time they were home—only spending money and idling. What the advantage of a honeymoon is I never could see. It is a cruel institution, for it makes a young couple sick of each other's society, whereas, if they were at home, and had their daily duties to attend to, they would have something else to think of than each other's shortcomings.'

'At what o'clock do you expect them?' asked Dennis.

'I cannot tell. They take post-horses from St. Columb. They have been spending their month in Truro; or rather on the outskirts. Rose has a house in Kenwyn, about a mile outside. If it had been in Truro, it might have been let; but there has been no tenant found for it all the while she has been here, so she has been out of pocket, had to put in a couple, as caretakers, at so much per week, whereas if let money would have come in. That comes of leaving it in the hands of lawyers. I don't believe that any trouble has been taken to let the house. I suppose they make something out of it—got some understanding with the man I have put in the house to keep it. But what is one to do—at a distance? I can't run about searching for tenants. I want to sell the place, and I will do so.'

'But does—does your daughter-in-law wish it? She was born in the Kenwyn house; it is associated with her childhood and happiest recollections.'

'If she does not like it, she may lump it. I do not see the fun of paying a salary to a caretaker, and having house and furniture deteriorate, whereas the money for which it was sold could be well expended here. If she is a fool and don't see that, I pity her.'

'You wish the young people to live here with you?' asked Dennis.

'Wish—choose,' answered the Squire. 'Hark! there they are.'

He rose and walked to the porch. Penhalligan hung

back, a spasm of pain came over him, and drops stood on his brow.

The old man boisterously welcomed his son and Rose, and shouted to the post-boy to go round to the kitchen and regale himself.

'Come in, come in!' he roared. 'That is right—glad to return to Towan; utterly tired of each other; ready to take off your coats and be at work. Heigh! Gerans, the mare has foaled. Poor Buttercup! we nearly lost her in milk fever. I haven't been out in the "Mermaid" since you left. Come in: here is Mr. Penhalligan, run up to welcome you, and see how you both look. Last time we saw you, you were like two ring-doves. Have you begun to peck out each other's feathers yet?'

Gerans went up at once to Dennis, with his hand extended, and his honest face radiant with good-nature. 'Glad to see you, old fellow,' he said, wringing his hand. 'How is Loveday? Is she here?'

'I should have thought,' said Rose, somewhat sharply, 'that a dutiful son's first thought should have been of his mother.'

'How is my mother?' asked the docile Gerans, turning to his father.

'All right; never was better — except for fancies. Thinks herself ill, imagines an ache in a rib—there it is; then in her toe, and the obedient ache flies thither; and so it dances all over her body in attendance on her fancies. Is it not so, Penhalligan? No—of course you will not admit it; any more than a parson will admit we are not all miserable sinners in need of tinkering into tolerable Christians.'

Rose, on entering, had given Dennis a very cool salutation, but when she heard her inconsiderate husband rush into inquiries after Loveday she changed her mind, and greeted him with considerable cordiality, hoping thereby to make Gerans jealous. But Gerans was without a spark of suspicion in him. 'That is right,' he said; 'glad to see you welcome our friend cordially.' Rose looked at him to see if he were in earnest; when she saw that he was—pouted, and went off to her room.

'Well, Dennis,' said the unconscious Gerans, 'very pleased to see you again, and only wish you had something

as bright to cheer you as I have. I hope you have been here often to enliven my father. Father, I suppose you have wanted me home?'

'Oh, yes,' answered the old man. 'I had to sit up with Buttercup all night, and give her gruel, because you were not here. Can't trust Tom Geake. Can't trust anyone, now I have lost old Tregellas. Geake will promise everything, but performance is a limping leg that don't keep pace with promise. Lord bless me!' exclaimed old Gaverock, 'I've had to be master and mistress together, and order dinner and keep the maidens in discipline. Mother can t or won't get about, and there would have been riot and waste if I had not looked to everything. Now Rose is here, she shall be housekeeper. I found the maidens in the kitchen had been using the silver, and sending me the plated forks and spoons. I found that out because I saw a silver spoon in the pig's trough and inquired how it had got there.'

'You will stay and sup with us, Dennis?' said Gerans, arresting the doctor as he was taking his hat. 'Come, on my return you must be neighbourly.'

'I had rather go home,' answered Penhalligan; 'Loveday will be expecting me.'

'I will send a boy down to ask Loveday to come up,' said Gerans. 'Do stay, and hear what we have seen and done. It is a real pleasure to meet you again. Rose has been among her acquaintances, but they were all strangers to me. I am rejoiced to meet an old friend once more. Do stay, Dennis. Rose will like it also. Now excuse me —I must run upstairs and see my mother.'

'Stay, Penhalligan, I wish it,' ordered the Squire. 'I must go out and see that the post-boy has put the horses in the proper stalls, and that some cider has been drawn for him. The maidens one day drew me a jug of lamp-oil for my dinner. I went into the kitchen myself in a pretty state of tempest, and found that they were drinking a bottle of my best claret. Stay here, Penhalligan, till I come back.' He went to the door, then returned, and said, 'High time Rose should be here. Will you believe me? I thought my nightcap was very damp, and yesterday found the chambermaid wiping out the basins with it.' Then he went away.

The glimpse Dennis had had of Rose on her arrival, flushed with excitement at her return to Towan, sufficed to show that her beauty was heightened, and to revive in him the fire that was slowly consuming his heart.

He could not, and he did not, believe that she loved Gerans. She had sneered at him only a few days before she accepted him. His jealous eye had not observed in her any of the tokens of love. What had been Rose's answer to himself when he told her of his passion? That he was too late. Too late might well be an expression of regret that she had accepted a man for whom she did not care, in ignorance that she was loved by another for whom she had a regard. To the jaundiced eye of Dennis, Gerans was undeserving of her respect. His good-nature was stupidity; his submission to his father, mean-spiritedness. He had recognised his good qualities before, now he disputed them all. How could a bright, intelligent girl like Rose love a boor? She must despise him, and regret that she was yoked to him.

As he thus thought, with knitted brow, by the hearth, Rose entered. On observing him, she resumed her distant behaviour. She was in a somewhat ruffled mood, and vexed at seeing him there. She did not forget that he was a rejected lover.

'I hope Loveday is well,' she said coldly.

'She is very well: she will be here directly.'

'Indeed! Does she know I am returned?'

'Gerans has sent a boy down to tell her to come up.'

Rose frowned. She did not speak for a moment. After a while she said, 'Gerans is inconsiderate and selfish. This is your sister's day for ironing, as I know. She must not be dragged away from her work. I am provoked at the thoughtlessness of Gerans. I will run down to-morrow morning and see her.'

'You wish me to stop the messenger?'

'Stop Gerans' messenger to Loveday! By all means'—she turned her head—'if he is not gone already.'

Dennis went out. When he returned he was accompanied by the Squire.

'Well, Rose!' shouted the latter. 'Very glad to have you here. Been quite lost without you. Mother has given up in a foolish despondent way, and there is no rousing her.

I have had to see to everything and been driven distracted by the maidens. They have run to the store cupboard as they liked, and eaten all the sugar: first the lump, then the moist. I had none for my toddy last night. When I found there was no sugar I took a pot of honey, and discovered finger impressions in that. How have you enjoyed yourself?'

'Very well, uncle,' answered Rose, hardly recovered from her irritation. 'You see I was among old scenes and old friends at Truro.'

'Did you find a tenant for the house?'

'No,' answered Rose airily, 'we did not trouble to look for one.'

'Why not? I expressly commanded Gerans to do so.'

'I did not wish it,' said Rose, 'and I forbade Gerans to move.'

'Indeed! And pray why?'

'I think it not unlikely we may go there again.'

'Not this year. You have had your jaunt with Gerans, and I can spare neither of you. The maidens have nearly driven me mad. Do you know that, having worn out the leather of the knife-board, they took and adapted one of the legs of my hunting breeches? No, no, Rose, here you stay and keep house for me.'

'But, uncle——'

'Rose,' said the old man peremptorily, 'I will it. Consider, you are paying fifty pounds in rates and for care-keepers for your house at Kenwyn, and it might be let for a hundred, and the tenant pay all outs. A hundred in pocket, instead of fifty out. Do you understand?'

'I think it not improbable that Gerans and I will settle there, instead of living with you at Towan.'

Old Gaverock burst out laughing.

'What is there absurd in this?' asked Rose, with heightened colour. 'I like Truro. I am known there. It is not a desert. There are plenty of friends about Kenwyn.'

'Have done,' said the old man roughly; 'enough that I don't choose it.'

'But perhaps I may wish it,' said Rose; 'I presume I have a voice in the matter.'

'This is soon settled,' exclaimed Gaverock, indignant at her opposition. 'I shall sell the house.'

Rose fired up. '*My* home! You cannot. You shall not.'

'Cannot and shall not are strong words,' said the Squire, 'and need justification. I am your trustee, and I shall act as I think proper.'

'But Gerans——' began Rose, with tears rising to her eyes.

'Gerans has no will but mine,' answered old Gaverock.

Through the month of her absence Rose had been resolving to try her strength against her father-in-law. She considered that it would be impossible for her to live happily in Towan if the old man were allowed to rule unopposed. He must be taught that other wills had to be considered beside his own. She had spoken to her husband on the subject, but had met with no encouragement. 'My father is a very clever man,' said Gerans; 'it will not do to oppose him. He never has met with resistance. Besides, he always knows better than anyone else—than you or I—what ought to be done.'

Rose had brought her opposition to the point just described when her husband came in. She felt her own weakness and need of help, so she turned eagerly to him. 'Gerans,' she said, 'I have just told your father that we are not going to live at Towan, and may go back to Kenwyn——'

'And he has pooh-poohed her,' said the old man.

'I will not be pooh-poohed!' exclaimed Rose. 'I like my old home, and I will not allow it to be sold.'

'Who talks of selling it?' said Gerans.

'Your father.'

'He has good reasons, doubtless.'

'He shall not do it. It is my home. I love it.'

Then Rose burst into tears. Gerans looked undecidedly from his wife to his father.

'I think,' said Dennis, 'that it will not do to sell, at any rate at present. Mining interest is down. There is no money circulating, but this will not be for long. House property about Truro is certain to rise in value. I have heard that land suitable for building purposes has gone up five and thirty per cent. within the last twenty years, and it is likely to become more valuable every year. Just now there is depression, and it would be a vast pity to sell at a

moment when you would get a poor price. Keep till better times; and in the meantime you may come to reconsider your determination.'

'Thank you,' said Rose.

'There is something in this,' acquiesced old Gaverock. 'Very well, Rose. I won't sell just at present. I'll think about it, and wait for better times.'

Rose turned with a flushed face towards her husband, and some words trembled on her lips, but she controlled herself and did not speak them. Penhalligan saw her, and guessed what was passing in her mind.

When she and Gerans were alone together she burst forth with, 'This is intolerable! You dare not raise a word in my favour. You would let your father play ducks and drakes with my money, and rub your hands and applaud.'

'My dear Rose, you are mistaken. My father will do the best possible for you.'

'I do not care whether he meditates good or bad. I want to have things done as you and I choose, not as he wills.'

'You are unreasonable, Rose.'

'I may be. I do not care. I want, and will have, my own way, whether reasonable or not. Why do you not take my part? Why must I be beholden to Mr. Penhalligan for support? You are my natural protector, and you stand like a sheep by my side and bleat Ah! when the old ram calls Baa!'

CHAPTER XXIII.

FIVE AND-TWENTY POUNDS.

When Dennis Penhalligan came home to Nantsillan, that evening, he scarcely spoke to his sister. She thought he looked haggard and miserable—more so than usual. He walked straight to the piano, opened it and began to play. After waiting for him to cease, she went to him, laid her hand lightly on his shoulder, stooped, and kissed his brow.

'It is late, Dennis. I am going to bed. Is there anything you would like to eat or drink that I can fetch you? Little Ruth has gone to roost three hours ago.'

He shook off her hand impatiently.

'You will not remain up long,' she said. 'You want sleep as much as a child.'

'Do you grudge me my only pleasure?' he asked impatiently. 'I am parting from my best solace.'

'What do you mean, Dennis?'

'I am going to sell the piano.'

'You shall not do that. No, Dennis, indeed you shall not.'

'It cannot be helped. If we eat, we must pay for our food. We cannot live without food, and we can live without music.'

'Oh, Dennis, dear brother! It was mamma's instrument. Her sweet influence will pass away, it almost seems, if the piano goes. When you are unhappy, and vexed about money—and other troubles, you fly to this, and find comfort in its music.'

'Yes,' he said, 'that is just why it must go.'

'I do not agree with you.'

'I must be robbed and bereaved of everything,' he said. 'Do you know who will buy it? Old Anthony Loveys—because his wife is talking of a dance, and their harpsichord is worn out. He will give five-and-twenty pounds for the instrument.'

'Dennis, it cost a hundred and fifty.'

'We must take what we can get.'

'Oh, my brother, what would you do without your piano? It is necessary to your happiness.'

'I have no happiness—as beggared of that as of cash.'

'You must not be deprived of it. You would never, nowhere, be able to get one as cheap, and—it is so good. Why do you not ask Mr. Gaverock to lend you the money?'

Dennis shook his head.

'You are too proud,' she said timidly.

'I do not see my way to being able to repay the money. What prospect is there of this practice improving? What chance is there of farmers being more ready to pay for medical attendance? The poor call me in, and I must take my pay as I can, in pence.'

Loveday sighed. She kissed him again, and withdrew, not to sleep, but to think.

The state of poverty in which they were was becoming distressing. Dennis did not make way in the neighbourhood; his gloomy temper, morbid and touchy, did not conciliate good-will, and his rigid conscientiousness dissatisfied patients who wanted to be thought and to think themselves ill. His pride stood in the way of success. He would make no effort to be popular, because he would not conciliate the good opinion of persons whose opinions he considered not worth having. Perhaps the only individual who got on with him and whom he did not repel was Squire Gaverock. The Squire was so rough himself, that he appreciated the unyielding temper of the doctor.

Loveday would have lost heart but that she supposed her brother's disappointment about Rose must wear off, and then perhaps he would become brighter and more sanguine. His manner and mood were depressing, but she made a brave struggle not to be crushed by them. How to better their prospects occupied her mind night and day. It was clear to her that till the daily grind of poverty was relieved there was no chance of her brother's spirits improving.

A fat sorrow, says a Cornish proverb, is better to bear than a lean sorrow. She made great allowance for the morose mood of Dennis. He had to bear a very heavy disappointment on great leanness.

Next morning, without waiting for Rose to visit her, Loveday went up to Towan. Rose received her stiffly she thought; but Loveday was without suspicion, and she attributed the distance and the coldness of her reception to nervousness on the part of Rose at being seen in her new condition as bride.

After a little general conversation, which dragged, Loveday went headlong at the purpose of her visit.

'My dear Rose,' she said, 'I have come to ask a great kindness of you, a kindness which is to remain strictly between me and thee. I need say nothing about our being straitened in circumstances. Dennis has but one solace in all his troubles—his piano. You have heard how beautifully he plays on it. That instrument when new cost a hundred and fifty guineas, and was my father's wedding present to my mother. It is not, of course, worth the sum then given for it; but it is a good piano, and worth a good deal of money. Dennis is in immediate difficulties, and

proposes selling it to Mr. Loveys, who will give five-and-twenty pounds for it. If the piano leaves our house, I do not know what will happen to Dennis: he will become so depressed that nothing will rouse him again. You do not know how bitter life can be made by the lack of a few shillings: how it galls the pride and frets the temper, how it darkens the eyes, and lies like a festering thorn in the sick soul. I have come up here to entreat you to do Dennis and me a great kindness. Will you buy our piano and leave it with us till you want it, or till we can redeem it? I do not like to ask you to advance us the money. I am, like Dennis, too proud to do that; but'—she laughed through the tears that were in her eyes—'I delude my haughty spirit by a trick: I say—buy the piano. We will consider it as yours, take care of it for you, and—yet—I am sure you will allow us to repurchase it of you if we are ever able to afford it.'

She fixed her earnest eyes on those of Rose. Rose had been offended by the desire of Gerans to see Loveday directly he arrived at home, and could not forgive his sending down after her, and had felt angry with Loveday and determined to keep her at a distance. But Rose was kind-hearted, and was at once touched by the story told her—touched especially, as Loveday pleaded not for herself, but for Dennis. Rose pitied the young doctor. Penhalligan had loved her very dearly, with an intensity of passion of which Gerans was incapable; and her marriage had been to him a bitter disappointment. Rose was relieved directly she heard Loveday's request, because an opportunity was offered her of showing the rejected suitor a little favour and doing him a great kindness.

Loveday went on. 'Dear Rose, I see by your face that you pity him—poor fellow. You will do what I ask, will you not? Now for something further. I have no doubt that you will want needlework executed for you. Mrs. Gaverock is ill, and can do little. You have told me repeatedly that you are unskilful with the needle. Allow me to do all the making and mending that is required for the house, and let me earn a small sum, which can be struck off quarterly from the piano debt. May this be so?'

Rose, in effusive pity and good nature, caught her round the neck and kissed her.

'My dear Loveday,' she said, 'I have not the sum with me just now in my purse, but you shall have it. I will give it you and your brother—that, and more.'

'No,' said Loveday, 'we will not receive any money as a present. You shall buy the piano, and suffer me to repurchase it. If you are to do us a kindness, it must be done on my terms.'

'Gerans shall get me the money at once out of my father-in-law.'

'You will not tell anyone what it is for: that is to remain a secret between us. Only Dennis must know; and, believe me, he will value the piano all the more when he knows it is yours.'

'Will he?' exclaimed Rose. 'I am so glad to hear that.'

Squire Gaverock and Gerans were out, so that Rose was unable to speak to them whilst Loveday was with her.

'I suppose your brother will be coming up in the evening,' she said. 'I will send the money by him.'

Then Loveday left.

Gerans and his father did not return till late in the afternoon. They had been out together in the boat. When Gerans went to his room to change his coat, Rose followed him.

'I want five-and-twenty pounds,' she said.

'Do you?' asked Gerans. 'Your wishes are moderate. I want a thousand, but I do not know where to find them.'

'I want the money at once,' said Rose. 'I have immediate need of it.'

'For what purpose?' asked he. 'There are no shops here. You have spent quite enough at Truro.'

'Never mind the object. I want and will have the money.'

'My dear Rose, you are welcome to it, as far as I am concerned.'

'The money is mine,' said Rose.

'My father manages for you. He is your trustee. The guardianship of your dear self he has transferred to me, but not the trusteeship of your fortune.' He put his arm round her, to draw her to him and kiss her, but she was annoyed, and with a twist escaped his arm.

'It seems to me vastly strange,' said Rose, 'that I

should have three or four hundred a year, and yet not be able to touch twenty-five pounds when I want them.'

'Tell me what for, and I will ask my father to let you have the sum.'

'I will not tell you. The reason is good enough: I want it.'

'But that is not a reason wherewith to convince my father.'

'I will give no other.'

'Then you stand little chance of obtaining the money.'

'Do you mean to tell me that you refuse to ask him for it.'

'No, Rose, dear. I will ask, but he is not likely to consent.'

'*Make* him give it me.'

'I make my father!' Gerans fairly laughed at the idea. 'I thought that by this time you knew how resolute a man he is.'

'I will not be satisfied with twenty-five pounds now,' said Rose. 'I will have forty. Go and ask him for forty.'

'Be reasonable, my sweet blossom,' said Gerans. 'Anything that you desire in reason you shall have, but a sufficient reason must be shown. My father is responsible for your money, and he will not let you have it to throw away.'

'I am not going to throw it away.'

'What are you about to do with it?'

'I will not tell.'

'I have nothing of my own,' said Gerans good-humouredly, 'or I would gladly let you have what you want, and ask no questions; but with my father it is otherwise. He must know the why and wherefore of every penny spent.'

'Come with me,' said Rose. 'I will have it out with the Squire.'

She was very angry, and went down into the hall with her cheeks flaming and her pretty lips pursed. Gaverock was there. He had thrown himself into his chair without changing his clothes or washing his hands, which were stained with gunpowder. His hair was very rough, heaped in a thick tangle on his head. He was cleaning his gun,

and the air in the hall was impregnated with the offensive odour. He threw the oiled, blackened rag into the fire.

'There are others than the maidens want keeping in order,' said Rose, looking at the gun, sniffing, and tossing her head.

'The maidens!' repeated old Gaverock. 'They do indeed require looking to. Will you believe it?—I had no butter with my bread for two or three days. I was told the cows had yielded badly. Then the maids were all laid up with a bilious attack, and had to take blue pill and be visited by the doctor. I found they had been guzzling at the clotted cream. That is why I had no butter. If my wife can't, or won't, look after them, you must do so, Mistress Rose. You are not here only as a beauty, but for business.'

'I am here now on business,' said she. 'I want money—forty pounds.'

'Forty porpoises!' laughed Gaverock. 'Whence are you going to get them?'

'From you. I must have money. It is mine, and I will have it. My father did not leave you my trustee to bully me, and deprive me of my money.'

'Halloo, Mistress Briar Rose! Showing your thorns?' He looked at her with astonishment. 'This is the second time. Yesterday; then again to-day.'

'I want only fair treatment,' said Rose. 'I want money. I will consent to take five-and-twenty pounds, but not one farthing less.'

'If you have any bills, bring them to me,' Gaverock said. 'But you shall not have the money without telling me the purpose for which it is destined.'

'That I will not tell you,' said Rose stubbornly.

'Very well!'

Gaverock put his hands into his pockets, threw his head back in the chair, and stretched out his legs their full length. The action was defiant, contemptuous, and Rose's blood flamed.

'You shall find me the money,' she said, 'or I will go to a lawyer, and get him to insist on your giving me up my own.'

Gaverock turned his head, and looked at her; then laughed.

'Gerans, there is a mutinous spirit here that must be quelled, or your cruise will end in wreck.'

'I think, father, you might as well let her have something. You have just asked her to take the management of the house out of my mother's hands, and, as you know well, there must be money given her for housekeeping.'

'The money is not for housekeeping,' said Rose, whose bosom was heaving with the breath that panted, and whose heart was beating fast.

'Let me know her object, and, if I think it right, she shall have the money,' said the old man composedly. 'But, Gerans—

> A whistling woman and a crowing hen
> Are good for neither God nor men.

This is not even a crowing barndoor fowl, but a strutting, blustering jenny-wren.'

Then there came a knock at the porch door.

'There is Penhalligan. I know his step and rap. Gerans, run and open to him,' said the Squire.

'Gerans shall not open the door!' exclaimed Rose angrily. 'As you can't manage your maidens, you order your son about. It is a servant's place to answer the door, not that of a gentleman.'

'Nonsense, Rose,' said Gerans. 'How can you be so foolish? Penhalligan is a friend. One friend always flies to open to another.' Then he moved towards the door.

Rose rushed out of the room, ran upstairs, and locked herself into her own apartment, where she gave vent to her anger and disappointment in tears.

Presently Gerans came up and knocked at the door; she would not even answer, much less open to him, and he descended again.

She did not appear at supper, and again Gerans came to her door.

'I want nothing,' she said, in answer to his questions.

He hesitated a little while on the landing, and then said peremptorily—

'Open the door!'

'No,' she answered; 'I am not coming down.'

'Open the door, Rose.'

'I will not.'

'Then I will burst it open.'

She was alarmed, and obeyed. She stood, frightened, in the doorway; her hair dishevelled, and her eyes red.

'Rose,' he said in a gentle tone, 'you have been very foolish. You shall have the five-and-twenty pounds. My father has consented.'

'Who has got that out of him?' asked she eagerly. 'You?'

'Not I,' answered Gerans. 'That matters nothing. There, Rose, wash your face and come down.'

'Who persuaded your father?'

'Penhalligan reasoned with him. My father is quite open to reason, but he will not be defied and brow-beaten.'

'Penhalligan did it!'

'Yes. My father will furnish you with a regular allowance, paid quarterly, for you to dispose of as you see best.'

'This is Mr. Penhalligan's proposal?'

'Yes, and a very sensible one.'

She stamped her foot angrily on the floor, and took a turn round the room, with teeth set and flashing eyes.

'Gerans,' she said, with heaving bosom, 'I do not know whether I most despise you or——'

'Or what?'

She turned sullenly away without answering.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A FOUR-LEAVED SHAMROCK.

Dennis Penhalligan was walking through the Coombe next morning. The spring or early summer sun was streaming through the young leaves of the wood. Flies danced in the golden light. The dingle was fragrant with spring flowers. The bluebells were not over; the red-robin was in bloom. The fern was raising its red, furred shepherds' crooks out of the ground, ready to uncoil as the heat grew more generous; the speedwell threw up its blue spires.

The wood-doves cooed softly; a squirrel leaped among the interlaced boughs—his was an easy run overhead, for here the boughs were netted like coarse lace; as they were

debarred from rising high, they spread laterally and formed a densely woven screen of branches, twigs, and foliage. A magpie screamed and rushed away. Dennis looked after it and laughed mockingly. 'One for sorrow; only one,' he said. His thoughts were weaving a plaiting like the branches above him; he was thinking of Rose. It seemed to him that he could understand her heart. She had never loved Gerans; she had been persuaded into taking him partly, perhaps, because she was comfortable at Towan, and did not know where else to go; partly induced by his good looks and easy good nature. She had not known in time that she was loved by him, Dennis, or she would have hesitated, perhaps have refused Gerans. Dennis was rejected only because he asked too late. He clung to this thought. He built out of it a hope that he was kindly regarded by Rose; that she harboured a secret liking for him in her heart—a liking which, under more favourable circumstances, might have unfolded into love. Now that she was married she had found out that she did not love Gerans. There was a void in her heart which could not be filled by such as he. Dennis had watched her face on her return from the bridal tour; he had been present at the quarrel on the arrival. He had seen her turn an angry, disappointed countenance on her husband. There had been no trace of affection in her expression when she spoke to him. Only yesterday there had been an altercation. He had arrived in the middle of it; he had seen Rose dash out of the room with a face on fire with indignation and wrath. Gerans had, of course, occasioned it. Dennis heard that Rose had wanted money, and he himself had advised the old Squire to let her have pin money, and not create a lasting quarrel by unreasonable refusal. The Squire had yielded to his advice.

The marriage was like to be a miserable one. Dennis did not regret this. He felt bitterly that Gerans had spoiled his own happiness, and blighted that of Rose, who certainly would have been happy in his love.

Whilst he was thus thinking he came out into a glade. Here the sun lay on a bed of turf, completely buried under old brown autumn leaves. The wind had eddied here as it swept down over the trees, and had heaped the dead leaves above the grass. They lay dense as a russet carpet,

stifling the grass below by forbidding light and air to reach it.

Dennis Penhalligan stood still and looked at the carpet of dead leaves. The effect was singular. In the wood the soil was teeming with life; here was one broad tract of death. The rains had wet and glued the leaves together; those beneath were, perhaps, half-rotten, but the upper surface was uninjured. The leaves were distinct as plates of mail, and covered the earth like a panoply, protecting it from every arrow of sunlight.

When Dennis put his foot on the bed of leaves it bent, but did not break, and the soil beneath seemed spongy. He looked round and saw exactly how the phenomenon had been brought about. The glade was completely enclosed by dwarf trees; when the wind drove the leaves into it there they whirled, but thence they could not escape. There was no door of escape open for them. When the wind rushed up the valley from the sea and stripped the withered foliage from the boughs and carried it in a fluttering cloud before it, it swept them all into this open space and left them to spin and dance and turn over and over there, and finally fall on one another, till they were cemented together where they lay by common decay. With the leaves were split-open beech-mast cases, with prickly outsides, all empty, and many masts, but the masts were lifeless. Dennis stooped and pressed several between his fingers; they were fleshless husks, refused even by the wood-pigeons.

'Such a backwater as this I find myself in here,' he said, 'a place of withered hopes and dead promise, of empty aspirations and disappointed ambitions. I cannot escape from it. Here I must spin about and rot away, without a prospect of emancipation.' He bowed and picked up a rose-hip, no longer bright scarlet and hard, but pulpy, black, decayed.' 'Nor I alone,' he said with a sigh: 'the rose also must wither here, lose its beauty, and become filth on the face of the earth—it will be so also with the other Rose.'

He walked on; the little footpath was embedded in leaves, somewhat crushed and half-converted into mire. All at once Dennis stopped, looked, and knelt down. Before him was a little spot of green, some two or three living

leaves had driven their way through the casing of dead leaves. Dennis put his hand to one of these and picked it. 'Is it possible? A four-leaved shamrock!'

At the same moment the bushes parted before him, and Rose appeared, framed in young spring green foliage and bursting honeysuckle, the sun on her golden hair and in her brilliant blue eyes, and illumining her delicately-coloured face. She wore a white straw hat, trimmed with pink, shaded satin ribbon in large bows, and lined with silk of the same hue; a white kerchief was round her bosom; she was dressed in a soft silvery-grey gown, short, showing her pretty little feet in white stockings and low black shoes. In her hand she held a packet of white paper with a scarlet seal, very large, on it.

Dennis remained kneeling at her feet, looking up at her as in a trance, hardly able to believe that he saw the true Rose, and not a spirit of the wood appearing in her form to deceive and torment him.

'What is it that you have found, Mr. Penhalligan?' asked Rose smiling.

He remained still on one knee, speechless.

'Have I caught you in the commission of a crime!' asked Rose, drawing nearer. Then she also stooped. 'A four-leaved clover,' she said with delight. 'That is lucky. You—you who are for ever bewailing your misfortunes, you have got the good luck to-day in your hands. You are right not to speak. A word will break the spell. You must form a wish, and that wish is sure to be granted.'

He rose now to his feet, holding the shamrock-leaf in his hand, and looking from it to Rose.

'Come,' said she, 'form your wish; it is yours.'

He looked intently at her, and her eyes fell before his burning glance. Then he shook his head and handed her the leaf. 'I have nothing to wish for,' he said.

'Oh, happy man, who has everything he desires!'

'Not so, Mistress Rose; one who has lost the only thing he could wish for, one who is deprived of that has not another wish left.'

Rose coloured. She understood his meaning and was confused. She rapidly recovered herself and said, 'You are too soon dispirited, Mr. Penhalligan. You think, at the first discomfiture, that all is lost. I am sure you

were wishing very much for something. I can read your heart. I know what passes therein.'

He started, and his colour deepened.

'I do,' she continued. 'You thought you had lost your piano, and were wishing to be able to keep it. See, your wish is granted. It is yours to keep till—till you need it no more.'

He raised his brows. 'I do not understand. Has Loveday been blabbing?'

'Loveday has sold me her piano, the pretty instrument that was her mother's, and to which you had no right whatever. Loveday has fled to me to save her from her brother. She has sold it to me for twenty-five pounds. Here is the money. You can hand it to her from me. I ask you a favour, Mr. Penhalligan. Will you keep my piano in your house, as there is no room for it at Towan, and practise on it as much as you can to preserve it in tune till I want it, which will not be till I leave Towan, and set up my tent-poles in Truro?'

'How kind of you—how very kind?' said the Doctor, greatly moved and colouring deeply.

'Not at all. Selfish, most selfish,' answered Rose. 'But you see I was right. I read your wish, and brought fulfilment at the same time.'

'To be thought of kindly by you, Mistress Rose, was more than I dared desire.'

'Take this,' she said, and pressed the little packet into his hands. 'Give it to Loveday from me, and take no toll on your way.'

He caught her hand and bowed his lips to the finger-tips. The blood rushed into her brow.

'That will do, Mr. Penhalligan. You owe me no gratitude. I am consulting my own convenience. When I move to Truro I shall carry off my piano.'

'May that never be!'

'O selfish man, you want to keep my piano!'

'I do not wish to lose sight of my benefactress.'

'I am not a benefactress, I repeat. You mistake.'

'I make no mistake. May I offer you now this four-leaved shamrock? As you say, it has fulfilled my wish, perhaps it may fulfil yours.'

'It is too late—I have spoken.'

'It is not too late; you have not had the shamrock in your hand yet.'

'Is that so? Very well, I will accept the leaf.'

He gave it her, and she stood in the sweet sunlight on the mat of dead leaves, the doves cooing in the wood, a pair of white butterflies flickering about her—a lovely object, lovely and sweet as a wild rose in June. She frowned whilst she considered what her wish should be, though a pretty dimple played about her mouth. She was half-amused, half-ashamed of herself. By degrees the expression of her face changed. The brightness and merriment went out of it, and a shadow of vexation and a gloom of discontent crossed it. Dennis watched her face intently. The light of the sun was full on her, so that she could not lift her eyes to see him, but he could watch every change in her countenance.

'I have wished,' she said moodily, 'but I have no hope that my desire will be answered.'

'I believe I have read your wish,' he said.

She started, looked up, but in the dazzling light her eyes fell again; in her clear face the tell-tale blood flickered. She had been wishing that Gerans would be a little more resolute with his father.

In another moment her mood changed. The cloud was dispersed, laughter and dimples returned, and with a short twinkling glance at Dennis, she said—

'Well, Mr. Penhalligan, I hope you have learnt the lesson to-day—Never despair.' Then she went backwards among the bushes, putting forth her hands and drawing them apart, and in a moment was lost to sight. Dennis stood rooted to the spot, looking after her. He had quite misinterpreted the thoughts of her heart when her face clouded. Only in this was he right, that she had turned her mind to Gerans, and that her wish was connected with him.

When she had formed her wish she threw down the leaf; it lay at his feet resting on the dead leaves. He picked it up and put it to his lips. Then he opened his pocket-book and pressed the leaf therein.

He walked home with a tumult in his heart. When he came near his house he turned; he would not go in and be seen of his sister. He did not choose, he could not en-

dure that her eyes should mark the agitation of his mind. He felt that before her honest eye his own would turn away.

The last words of Rose rang in his ear—'Never despair.' What was the one thing he cared for? The one object of his heart's desire! He had told her plainly enough that he cared for, wished for her, and that he had no desire for anything beside. Having lost her he had lost everything. Knowing this, with strange significance she had bidden him hope on—not despair. Then the remembrance of Constantine came upon him. The sea had engulfed the one brother, why not also the other? Gerans was going that very day on the water with his father. Involuntarily Dennis looked up at the sky for a token of wind. Was this also in *her* mind, he asked himself, when she held the leaf and bade him hope on? Gerans, Gerans alone, stood in his way.

Then he laughed bitterly and harshly, as again his tread disturbed the magpie.

'One for sorrow—only one,' he said. 'A life-long sorrow, with only one solace in it—she hates and despises him as heartily as I hate and despise him.'

He looked at the packet he held; it was addressed to his sister in Rose's hand, and sealed with the crest of the Gaverocks, a goat on a mount, trippant, a canting crest on the name, which in old Cornish means 'The Goat-Hill.'

He entered Nantsillan Cottage, placed the letter on the piano, seated himself, and began to play. Then his sister came in. He was glad to be at the instrument that she might not see his face. He signed to her to take the packet.

'Dennis, dear,' she said, 'I know its contents. Twenty-five pounds. It will tide us over our present trouble.'

'And sweep us on into one that is worse,' he said.

'Why will you look for darkness instead of day? Be hopeful.'

He smiled. Twice he had been bidden not to be discouraged.

Loveday returned to her work, but presently looked into the room again.

'What are you playing, Dennis?'

'I am playing out of my own head and heart,' he answered.

'I do not like it; change the piece,' she said; 'it is wild, threatening, and uncomfortable. It has made me uneasy. Throw in some brighter chords; bring in a thread of sweet melody.'

'I cannot; the music leads me on; I follow, blindly. It is with music that is improvised as with destiny; we make neither, they make themselves.'

CHAPTER XXV.

A LOVEYS' VISITATION.

Now that Gerans was at home, old Gaverock dragged him from it. He made him ride with him to market and cruise with him about the coast. The Squire had for some time wanted to visit St. Ives, to have the 'Mermaid' refitted with sails and cordage, St. Ives being a great place for such manufacture. Accordingly, Gerans had not been home a week before the old man had told him to be ready to go with him to St. Ives. Gerans raised no objection.

'I suppose the neighbours will be coming to call on us,' said Rose, pouting. 'I presume I am to be left alone to receive them.'

'Show them every hospitality,' answered Squire Gaverock. 'Stuff them with cake, make them drink your health in old port. I give you the keys. Don't let the maidens get it. Lord bless you! whilst you were away the nobbies (buns) came in without figs (raisins). I ate four nobbies and got but one fig. Yet the proper amount was served out, only the maidens ate the figs instead of putting them into the nobbies. Then—will you believe it?—I sent a maid to draw me a jug of cider for my supper, and she forgot to turn the tap, so by next morning a whole hogshead had run to waste.'

'I cannot go after the servants and see that they do their work properly,' said Rose, tossing her head.

'Very well,' answered Gaverock, grimly; 'then I will tell you what to expect. You will have all the crusts and stale ends of loaves served for you to eat, whilst the maidens

are gorging on fresh bread. That was my experience. Never spent such a miserable time as since my old woman has been laid up. Damn hysterics! Gerans, come on. In that villainous month with the maidens I got more grey hairs than in three years previous. I do not know what would have been the end had not Loveday Penhalligan come to the rescue, and brought some order into the store closet and discipline into the kitchen. All the lemons went mouldy whilst I had the key, and the mice made a nest in the bag of vermicelli. I found the gardener's boys playing marbles in the backyard with the nutmegs. How they got them is a mystery. I suppose the maidens——'

'Perhaps,' said Rose, throwing up her chin, 'it would conduce to your happiness, uncle, if Loveday were to take up her residence in the house altogether, and manage the maidens, the store-room, Gerans, and me.'

'I'll tell y' what, mistress,' said the old man, 'we shall be brought to that if you don't take heartily to doing your duty. Someone must be housekeeper here. I won't; one month was enough for me. I'd rather manage a caravan of monkeys than a kitchenful of maidens. If you won't do your duty, someone must be summoned to do it for you.'

'Father,' said Gerans, 'Rose will always do her duty.'

'Do not speak off your book,' said Rose sharply, turning on her husband. 'You cannot answer that I will do my duty; but you may promise that I will always follow my pleasure.'

'The colt must be broken into harness by you or by me, Gerans,' said the Squire on his way down to the boat. 'At the touch of the whip up go her heels: none the worse for that in the end. But it will be a tough job just at first to break her. Whatever you do, Gerans, don't give her her head. She wants a firm hand on the reins; must be ridden with the curb; and when she sets back her ears, dig into her flanks with your spurs, and cut her this way, that way, till your arm aches. Trust me; I know women.' The old Squire illustrated his instruction with hand and heel. 'After a while,' he went on, 'it is beautiful to see how they obey. You have only to draw your whip tenderly across their necks, and they understand you as if you spoke volumes. I am sixty-five; I have made my experiences; I know them.'

In the meantime the poor woman on whom his ex-

perience had been made with curb, and bearing rein, and spur, and whip, was a broken-spirited, failing creature, unable to attend to the requirements of her house; who came down into the drawing-room every day, was visited by her husband, who tried to rout her into activity, who scolded, and hectored, and rebuked her for yielding to imaginary maladies, and piling all domestic vexations upon his back.

Gerans was dutiful and kind to his mother; but he could not be much with her, and his subjects of interest were not hers. Besides, for a month he had been away; and during that month, but for Loveday, she would have been neglected. Loveday had made a point of visiting the old lady every day. A tender love had sprung up between them, and Mrs. Gaverock was unhappy and restless on the day that she did not see the girl. Loveday had a soothing influence upon her mind, fretted with her husband's impatience, with the consciousness that household affairs were on the cross, that she had duties to discharge which she was incapable of discharging. Gaverock rushed into her room when anything went wrong. She suffered for the butter and the crusts, and the cider cask run out, and the jug of lamp oil, and the raisinless buns, and the mice in the vermicelli, and the boys with the nutmegs, and the mildewed lemons, and the hunting-breeches converted into a knife-board, and the wet nightcap. She worried about these things till they made her nervous and ill; her brain could not bear the daily annoyances; and when the Squire plunged into the room, and flung the store-room keys down on the table with an oath, and swore he would have no more to do with stores and servants, then Loveday took up the bunch, and distributed what was needed every day till the return of Rose.

It is a peculiarity of the female mind that it draws delight from the possession of a secret which it can share with one or two close friends. Mrs. Gaverock and Loveday had a secret—the secret of the marriage of the latter—and this secret formed the closest of bonds between them. Should this ever cease to be a secret, one great charm and sweetness of their intercourse would be gone. Both felt this, and shrank from the thought of Constantine's marriage becoming generally known.

After the return of Rose and Gerans, Loveday did not come to Towan every day to visit the old lady. She thought it was the place of Rose to become the consoler and stay of her mother-in-law. But Rose, though kind, was not considerate; and she did not understand and sympathise with the old lady so as to enable her to fill the position which was hers by right.

Squire Gaverock and Gerans would be absent for some days. For how many, depended on the wind and the activity of the refitters at St. Ives. Rose was not pleased at her husband being carried off immediately on his return home. The old man had not shown her proper consideration in throwing on her the sole responsibility of receiving visitors.

The same day that Squire Gaverock left, the Loveys' party came to call: old Anthony, young Anthony, and the Madam. Although we have put Madam Loveys last, she was the most important person of the three. Anthony Loveys, senior, was an old, heavy, red-faced man; and Anthony Loveys, junior, was a young, heavy, red-faced man. Neither had anything to say for himself, except on the subject of dogs and horses. To these two subjects the elder added rates. When Anthony junior reached the independent position and age of his father, he also, doubtless, would supplement dogs and horses with rates as topics on which he could talk. Mrs. Loveys was a woman with bright, keen eyes, and a Roman nose. She was accustomed to command in the house and outside, and met with equal obedience from her servants, her son, and her husband. She had inherited the domineering spirit of the Gaverocks; and, as her husband had yielded to it, she became the one person of authority in the house and in her parish. Even the clerk in church, when he gave out the psalm, announced 'Let Madam and I sing to the praise and glory,' &c. He thus gave it out, because he and she were the only persons in the church who sang. The peasants could not read; and the two Anthonies either had no voices or were too lazy to use them. Madam Loveys sang loudly and sang well. The congregation stood up to listen to Madam sing, and sat down to listen to the parson pray. Occasionally, during the service, Madam Loveys would rise from her knees, stand up, and look round. If she saw that any of the

labourers or their wives were asleep, or inattentive, she coughed. If this did not rouse them to devotion, she coughed a second time. She rarely was obliged to cough a third time, so greatly in awe of her did the people stand. The Loveys' party were shown into the parlour. Madam Loveys sailed in first—tall, portly, head erect, eagle eyes looking into every corner—followed by old Anthony, and old Anthony by young Anthony, scuffling in.

'How do you do, Lydia?' to Mrs. Gaverock on the sofa. 'Better, of course; don't deny it. I won't believe you. And Rose, my dear, glad to see you. Come to call and welcome you as one of us. Now, Anthony, give your aunt your right, not your left hand. How have you enjoyed your trip? Greatly, of course. You have got a fine fellow for a husband—quite a Gaverock in build, but wanting the Gaverock force of character. Anthony, don't shake your cousin's hand as if you were working a pump. Raise the finger-tips gallantly to your lips. You don't mean to tell me, Lydia, that Gaverock has gone to St. Ives, and has taken Gerans with him? Tell him when you see him that I say his conduct is preposterous—that *I* say it. He will mind me. You may sit down, Anthony.' She gave no instruction to her husband. She had given him up in despair, but her son, though aged one-and-twenty, was as yet unformed, and she did her best to model him.

'I am sorry Gaverock is not here,' said Mr. Loveys. 'I wanted to consult him. They've stuck on twopence in the pound in our parish. I don't understand it.'

'That is all right,' said Madam, 'don't you bother yourself about it. You never did understand anything in which division and subtraction were necessary.'

'But, my dear, twopence in the pound is not subtraction, it is addition.'

'If you are in doubt, send the overseers up to me with the rate-book. I'll go through the account. Anthony, you may go and look at the stables—only mind your boots. We are going to stay for tea.'

'Of course you are,' said Mrs. Gaverock kindly, but looking somewhat blank; for Mrs. Loveys overpowered her, and she was incapable of the strain of entertaining the two Anthonies.

'We are going to spend the evening,' said Madam; 'as

Hender and Gerans are gone, you are likely to be dull, so I have brought my husband and son to enliven you.'

Mrs. Gaverock looked with an appealing glance at Rose. Rose smiled. 'I am very glad, Aunt Honora,' she said, 'Loveday Penhalligan is coming; I will send down a boy for the doctor, and we will do our best to be merry. We will have music and cards.'

'I think,' said Mr. Loveys, 'that I also would like to look into the stables.'

'Go,' said his wife, 'examine the horses, and feel the pigs. We can do without you till tea time. I want a chat with Lydia and Rose, and you are in the way.'

'Thank you, my dear. I'll be sure to be here for the meal.'

Then Mr. Loveys slipped away.

Rose, nettled at the conduct of her father-in-law, was resolved to show him that she could do very well without his presence, that his absence was a relief to her. She was determined that she would do her best to give the Loveys a pleasant evening, knowing that Madam would tell her brother how vastly they had enjoyed themselves during his absence. But this was not her only motive. The Loveys' party were, when alone, very trying to Mrs. Gaverock, and it was her duty to the poor lady to relieve her of the trouble of entertaining them.

At the time of which we write, and the custom prevailed to some twenty-five years ago in the West of England, it was a common thing for friends to visit, sometimes uninvited, and to take a 'high tea'—that is, tea and meat and cakes and puddings and wine, and spend the evening till the moon shone on their ride or drive home. Few dined late. Nothing more hospitable, pleasant, and sociable could have been devised than these visits. In a thinly peopled region distances are great, and a visit entails a journey of some hours. Moreover, a visit in a thinly peopled country is hailed by those on whom the descent is made as a pleasure for which to be grateful. Also, a visit entailing several hours' drive over breezy downs makes the visitors hungry; therefore those visited, being grateful, exhibit their gratitude by feeding their visitors.

The Loveys family did not live at a great distance—in fact, they lived only in the next parish; nevertheless,

a visit with them, whether near or far, always meant a visitation of several hours, and a meal, to which the two Anthonies and Madam always did justice. Madam was hospitable in return. To call and not stay some hours and eat at her table was to offend her. This was the custom of the country and of the time, and we, who in our younger days were familiar with it, sigh over the old, homely, hospitable fashions that have passed away.

Loveday arrived shortly after, and Dennis came up in answer to a summons, bringing his music with him. Loveday at once saw what was to be done, to amuse the Loveys family to the relief of Mrs. Gaverock, and she devoted herself to doing this. It was hard to get anything but Yes and No out of young Anthony, but she did manage to galvanise him into a little life, assisted by his mother, who administered shocks at intervals by saying, 'Now then, Anthony, did you hear what Miss Penhalligan was asking? Of course you know where the wild yellow marigold grows, and will be happy to bring her some roots—say so.' Or 'Come, Antnony, no doubt you are right, that what Miss Penhalligan has seen in the glen is a badger; but go on, and promise to hunt there with the dogs and catch it, and cure the skin for her. You can do that, you know, with alum and pepper.' Or, 'Well, Anthony! Say something more than Lawk! when you have trodden the gathers out of Miss Penhalligan's gown.'

During tea, Mrs. Gaverock was left to herself in the drawing-room. Loveday took her a cup, and what she fancied from the table; but when the meal was over, the whole party returned to the parlour for a round game, and for music.

'Do you think, Mr. Penhalligan, that you could read us something?' asked Rose. 'Something not dreary and terrible; as a variety to cards and music. Not the "Essay on Man" and the Dissertation on Happiness.

> O Happiness! our being's end and aim!
> Good, Pleasure, Ease, Content! whate'er thy name:
> That something still which prompts th' eternal sigh,
> For which we bear to live, or dare to die,
> Which still so near us, yet beyond us lies,
> O'erlooked, seen double, by the fool, and wise.

'Let me hear the "Rape of the Lock,"' asked Mrs.

Gaverock gently; 'it is many years since I have either read it or heard it read.'

'Mistress Rose has Pope on the tip of her tongue,' said Dennis, 'surely she can recite us some of his verses.'

'No, Mr. Penhalligan, my memory is only stocked with scraps, like a rag-bag.'

'"The Rape of the Lock," by all means,' said Madam Loveys. 'Anthony knows nothing about it. His mind needs culture. Anthony, sit by me, and I can then ensure your keeping awake. I will nudge you, or touch you with my fan when we reach verses of conspicuous beauty. Mr. Penhalligan, you will confer a lasting obligation on us if you will read.'

'It would be unmannerly to make a condition,' said Dennis, 'but it is permissible to offer a petition. I venture to ask that between the cantos Mrs. Rose will favour us with her harp and a song.'

The evening passed briskly. Rose was in her element. At her father's house entertainments had been frequent; she was not shy; she was delighted to have distraction, relief from the monotony of life at Towan.

'I can see by aunt's face that she has enjoyed herself,' said Rose. 'We have not had too much of one thing, though Mr. Penhalligan's reading, and Loveday's singing, and Mr. Loveys' whist, and Madam's comments, and Mr. Anthony's attention, have all been admirable of their kind. I invite you here again on Saturday, and I will get some of the Brendons to come as well from the Rectory. But stay —I have a suggestion.' She threw a number of little books on the table. 'Why should we not, next time, diversify our amusements still further? At our house in Kenwyn, when papa was alive, we used to make up parties to read plays, each taking a part. Shall we begin on Monday? Take each a copy and all look over your parts. What do you say, Aunt Loveys? And you, Mr. Penhalligan? Let us begin "She Stoops to Conquer."'

CHAPTER XXVI.

IN THE DUSK.

Gerans and his father returned to Towan on Saturday evening. The 'Mermaid' was run into the little port at Sandy Mouth, and secured, then both ascended the cliff, for home.

'What have we here?' asked the Squire, 'hats and sticks! That is the hat of Loveys—I know it, and there is Madam's umbrella. Her clogs also.'

'Dennis is also here,' said Gerans, 'I know his overcoat.'

'And that green umbrella belongs to the Misses Brendon,' said Hender Gaverock. 'There seems to be a party here.' He opened the door into the hall, and saw that the table was laid with glass, silver, preserves, pies, cold chicken, and adorned with flowers.

Old Gaverock laughed. Whilst the cat is away the mice are romping. I must take off my sea-togs and make myself presentable. 'You do the same, Gerans.'

'Where is Mrs. Rose Gaverock?' asked the young man of a servant. He was told that she was in her own room. Mrs. Gaverock was in the parlour with the company.

Gerans was disappointed. In his kindly, tender heart the words Rose had said to him before he left rankled. He tried to forget and bury them out of thought, but they worked up, like stones in a ploughed field. He was inclined to judge her charitably. She was accustomed to have her own way, and was impatient of opposition. When opposed, she fired up and said words which, doubtless, she afterwards repented having uttered, and which at the time they were spoken were exaggerations of her momentary feeling.

She had told him that she despised him, she had scoffed at his obedience to his father; but his conscience was clear; he had given way to his father because his father was in the right; surely Rose would have despised him if he had supported her in demanding and doing what was wrong. She did not mean what she said. Her words were the spluttering of sparks from a burning log of fir.

The sparks scorched and marked where they fell, but were too small and powerless to ignite anything. Besides, Gerans had been accustomed to rough words from his father, all his life, which had gone with a good deal of affection. Nevertheless, the experience of stinging speeches from a woman's lips was new to Gerans, and was painful, partly because he believed them to be undeserved, chiefly because the speaker was very dear to him.

He had looked forward to his return, that he might be alone with Rose, and be completely reconciled. She would beg his pardon for what she had said, and he would caution her not to test her powers against those of the old Squire. He heard the buzz of voices in the parlour; he was glad she was in her own room; he could see her alone first, before she met the visitors. Their presence was not pleasant to him. He was not very well, and would have to remain in his own room; he must either withdraw her from the party downstairs, or remain the evening by himself.

'Why should she not keep me company?' he said. 'I would gladly do so, if she were ill. She will be pleased to be with me. A woman is happy to sacrifice something for the man she loves. She is not wanted in the parlour, for my mother is there, my father is going in, and my aunt is hostess in our house.'

He opened his dressing-room door and went in, and would have passed through into the bedroom beyond, but he heard Loveday's voice, within, speaking to Rose. The door of communication was ajar. There was another door into the bedroom from the corridor outside.

'You are longing for their return, I suppose?'

'Oh dear, no!' answered Rose, 'not at all. I fairly skipped when their backs were turned. Loveday, there is nothing like marriage for making a girl sick of mankind.'

Then ensued a pause. Presently Loveday spoke again: 'When do you suppose they will be home?'

'Perhaps to-morrow, perhaps the day after. If I had my wishes, not for another week. I am not sure, though, that I should not like them to come home to-night, and see how well we can entertain ourselves in their absence. Now run down, dear; I will follow directly.'

Loveday left the room by the door into the passage. Then Gerans came in. There was a carpet on the floor,

and he had taken off his big waterboots in the back hall below stairs. Consequently, Rose did not hear his tread when he opened the door and entered. She was standing before a looking-glass, arranging a red geranium in her hair. She was prettily, coquettishly dressed in white, with short sleeves, and much of her lovely neck and throat showing. A coral chain was round her neck. There was a childlike beauty and simplicity about her appearance.

She heard the noise of his foot on her bedroom floor, and turned half round, with her arms raised, adjusting the scarlet flower, and the loose sleeves were fallen back, exhibiting her delicate, rounded, ivory arms. She supposed a servant-maid had entered, to tell her she was wanted below. But, as nothing was said, she turned round with an impatient movement.

'My dear Rose!' exclaimed Gerans.

She started. For a moment she looked at him, with parted lips, and expressionless, wide-opened eyes, without uttering a word. Then suddenly she became scarlet.

'What! already back? You startled me. I thought you would not be here so soon. I hardly expected you to sail on Friday.'

As she spoke, she withdrew her right hand from her hair, and held it out to him, whilst with the other she continued fidgeting with the flower and the pin that held it.

'We thought to take you by surprise, to give you pleasure, my sweet white Rose! my dear spring morning, my dewy blossom!'

He held her hand with both his, and drew her towards him, till he could pass his arm round her, hold her to his heart, which was beating fast, and kiss her brow.

'There,' he said, 'I shall not be away for so long again, if I can help it. Every day of absence has to me been one of longing for your presence.'

He spoke with a tone of reproach in his voice, not intentional. He spoke the truth, but as he spoke he recalled her words to Loveday, expressing a very different feeling.

'Let me have another look at the Pride of my Life,' he said, and held her at arm's length. Then he saw that he had not been wrong in calling her a dewy blossom, for tears stood in her eyes.

'Why are you crying?' he asked.

She bowed her head on her bosom, and gave no answer. Had she spoken she would have sobbed.

Gerans considered for a moment, and a line formed on his open brow, but it passed away. He thought that she was regretting her unkind words spoken before they parted, regretting the light words just said, in his hearing, to Loveday; and, in his good nature, he thought to spare her the humiliation of confessing the reason.

'Never mind,' he said. 'I startled you—did I not?'

'Yes,' she answered; 'I have not recovered myself yet.'

He went to the window, and looked out on the rainy, grey sky, to allow her, unobserved, to recover herself. He said, still gazing out through the panes of glass:

'We have had a wet miserable sail; but the expectation of soon seeing you has filled my heart with longing.'

She did not answer. After a while he turned round, and saw his young wife seated on a sofa, wiping her eyes.

'What!' he said. 'Not yet recovered?'

'Oh yes,' she answered. 'I was only thinking that——'

She bit her red, quivering lips, and her bosom rose with a sob.

'My dearest Rose,' he said. 'There—there! think no more about it.'

He took a chair, turned the back towards her, and seated himself on it astride, with his elbows on the back, looking at her. The window was behind him, and the evening light was on her pretty, troubled face. Gerans thought how lovely she was, what a prize was his, how surpassingly happy he ought to be.

'You have got company downstairs,' he said, to change the current of her thoughts, and divert it from self-reproach.

'Yes,' she replied, looking down at her lap; 'Uncle and Aunt Loveys are here, and young Mr. Brendon and his sister.'

'Loveday is also here, surely.'

'Yes; Loveday, of course, is here.'

'Is that all? Not Dennis?'

'Oh—Mr. Penhalligan also.'

She coloured slightly; her eyes were still on her lap.

But Gerans was entirely free from jealousy. He did not observe the flush.

'Has anything happened whilst I have been away?'

'Nothing particular. There have been calls. The Loveys' party, and the Brendons, also Captain and Mrs. Trefry, and the parson from St. Golan—I forget his name.'

Gerans rocked himself in his chair, without turning his eyes from Rose.

'I have not been well. I caught a cold, I suppose, in my eyes, and I have suffered much. One day I could not bear the light. I had to remain shut in at the little tavern where we put up at St. Ives, whilst my father went about the new sails and tackle.'

He stopped. She did not seem to be listening. When he stopped she started.

'Yes?' she said quickly. 'Sails and tackle you were speaking about.'

'I was telling you that I had been very unwell. I got a chill and inflammation of my eyes.'

'I am very, very sorry.'

'You have not observed how red they still are. I cannot bear a strong light.'

'I could not see; the room was dark,' she explained, and stooped and looked—but shyly—into his eyes.

He turned his head that she might observe how red and hot they were.

'I see. I am sorry.'

'I cannot bear much light, especially candle and lamp light, so I will not go downstairs I would prefer to sit here in the dusk with you. You can let me have a place beside you on the settee, and we will talk together. We shall enjoy that so much more than being downstairs with the Loveys and Brendon parties.'

'Yes,' answered Rose faintly, not cordially.

'But I suppose you must show yourself. Look here, Rose; explain to them why I remain away, and make an excuse for yourself as well. Was it not Pluto, the God of Darkness, who had Proserpine for a wife, half whose time was to be spent with the merry gods in light, and the other half with her husband in darkness? Well, so let it be to-night. Go down to tea, and after that is over slip away, and come to keep me company.'

'But.' said she, with trembling lips, 'we are going to read a play ; it is all settled, and I shall be wanted.'

'No, no,' answered Gerans cheerfully. 'Miss Brendon can take your part, but I do not suppose there will be reading where my father is present. He will endure nothing but cards.'

Then Gerans stood up, and went into his dressing-room.

'I have not been acting judiciously,' he said, 'sitting so long talking to you, in my wet clothes. However, I have not felt it ; I have been in a glow, sitting over against you, my pretty.'

Then he shut his dressing-room door.

No sooner was Rose alone than her self-restraint gave way, and she began to cry. Why, she could not explain to herself. She was disappointed of a pleasant evening, and of amusing herself reading her part in 'She Stoops to Conquer.' She was happy among many people ; she had dressed herself with special care to attract admiration, to force everyone present to say : How pretty she is ! What a lucky fellow Gerans Gaverock is to have got so charming a bride ! She wanted particularly to hear Mr. Penhalligan play, and to sing with him and Loveday 'Five times by the taper's light.' She had set her mind on playing her harp. Her beautiful arms, bare above the rosy elbow, would show to-night, and make even poor playing acceptable.

It was really too provoking of Gerans to come home that night—and with sore eyes also, which would prevent him from going down to the company. It was cruel, it was unreasonable of him to ask her to sit with him in the dark in the bedroom, whilst there were lights, and card-tables, and round games, and conversation, and laughter, and music below. She was obliged to wash her face, to put away the traces of her tears, before she could descend. She went downstairs at last, and assisted at tea ; but her cheerfulness was gone—a shadow of disappointment hung over her brow. Her attention was distracted, and she took little or no part in the conversation. This mattered the less because the Squire was there, and where he was no one else could talk. He was boisterous, in good spirits, and full of what he had done and seen in St. Ives. Mr. Loveys interrupted him once to ask his opinion about the extra

twopence in the pound added to the rate, but Hender Gaverock was too much interested in his own proceedings, and the conduct of the 'Mermaid,' newly rigged, to turn his thoughts to the rates, and consider whether the imposition was just or not.

After tea, Rose reluctantly apologised for leaving the guests, and promised to return as soon as she could be spared, then she went up to Gerans.

He kept her with him a long time, telling her what had been done, repeating in other words the uninteresting story of the expedition to St. Ives, already told during tea by his father. It seemed to her as if he never would have done—the time seemed interminable. Occasionally she heard the burst of laughter from downstairs, then the sound of the piano. Dennis Penhalligan was playing. She had heard the piece before, Beethoven's Sonata in C minor ; he had played it on the evening when she and Gerans were at Nantsillan, before that eventful Goose Fair.

As her mind wandered, drawn away by the music, indistinctly heard, the voice of Gerans sounded in her ear as out of a remote distance. and she no longer heard what he was saying. Then she recovered her thoughts with an effort, to catch a word or two, and make some suitable observation, or ask a pertinent question, that Gerans might not notice her abstraction.

Presently, he pressed her hand so tightly in his, that she uttered an exclamation of pain.

'You hurt me.'

'I do not think you are attending to me. I want to give you a piece of advice.'

'I detest advice,' said Rose. 'I never read the morals to "Æsop's Fables."'

'It is for your advantage,' said Gerans gravely. 'Promise me, my own darling, do not be cross with my father ; do not oppose him, if he is a little dictatorial and crabbed. He thinks you ought to be more yielding, and I am sure he will thwart you on all sorts of points till you give way. It is best to humour him. You got on very well with him before we were married. Why do you change your behaviour now? Nothing is to be gained by it. Take my advice, dear Rose, and give way.'

'And so,' said she angrily, 'I am to be thwarted,

contradicted, and bullied, and browbeaten, and you will stand by and allow it! You—my husband! allow it!'

'My dear Rose, be reasonable. He is my father. We are in his house. He is the best of men, but he has his humours. You can lead him where you will, if you pretend deference to his will.'

'I will not pretend. I have my will, as well as he.'

'If you are in the right, I will support you; if you are in the wrong, I will not. My father is an old man, and respect is due to grey hairs.'

'His hair is red.'

'Red mingled with grey. He is more than thrice your age. He knows far better than you what is wise and just and reasonable. I will not sustain you when you act on caprice, but in a matter of right you may rest on me—only, I am quite sure, my father will never interfere with you, without occasion, unless you provoke him. He is annoyed with you now. Take my advice and be submissive. You will get your own way with a tongue of velvet, rather than with a tongue roughened to a rasp.'

She shook her hand free from his, and stood up.

'I will not remain here,' she said, 'to be insulted. I have sacrificed my pleasure downstairs, to sit with you, and listen to your droning talk, like the whirr of a winnowing machine, all about nothing, whilst below there is music, and merry talk, and stories, and round games. So I am repaid. I will not come up here again till all are gone. Sit in the dark by yourself.'

'Send up Dennis Penhalligan,' said Gerans with a sigh. 'I want him to give me something for my eyes.'

'Send him up!' exclaimed Rose, in a tone of irritation. 'That is too bad! you will spoil our amusements by keeping him here, when he is wanted to sing, or play, or take a part in a game. You are selfish—in all things selfish, without a thought of me.'

She went out, and slammed the door; but as she stood on the landing before descending the stairs, she hesitated, and her hand on the banister shook. A qualm came over her conscience. She had spoken and acted unkindly to her husband. She half turned to run back, and throw herself into his arms and kiss his hot eyes. But she recalled his advice, and his warning not to expect support from him

against Hender Gaverock, and her bosom heaved with anger; she set her pretty red lips, and with firm step descended the stairs.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE MOSS-ROSE.

NEXT day was Sunday. Loveday was up early, looking at her flowers. She had been watching a moss-rose for some days, expecting its first bud to break. The bright morning sun had effected this, with its warm kiss, and Loveday picked the flower with delight; then, with instinctive kindness and unselfishness, ran up the hill to Towan, and without ringing entered the hall where breakfast was laid, and placed the moss-rose on Rose's plate. No one was in the room to observe her. She did not tarry, but ran home.

Rose, however, did not come down till late; Gaverock had made his own breakfast, when she arrived in the hall; Mrs. Gaverock had hers taken to her; and Gerans was there talking to Penhalligan, who had come to see how his eyes were, on his way to church. Rose was in her riding habit. She intended to go to church on Phœbus, her horse; the distance was considerable, and the road was muddy with the rain of yesterday. She made a laughing apology for her lateness; she had overslept herself, she said, and went to the head of the table to pour herself out a cup of tea. Then she saw the pretty bud on her plate. She looked up, and caught Penhalligan's eye; she coloured. The rose came from Nantsillan; there were no moss-roses at Towan. She concluded immediately that Dennis had brought it and put it in her plate for her. She said nothing, but pinned the bud into her bosom, then sat down and took a hasty meal.

Presently the front-door bell was rung, and Gerans, looking out, said, 'Rose, your horse is at the door.'

'I shall be ready in a minute,' she replied.

'I am not going to church to-day,' said Gerans. 'I will stay at home and nurse my eyes. Dennis, I dare say, will be kind enough to escort you, if my father has gone on before.'

They went out through the porch. The groom was holding Phœbus, a pretty roan, that might be said to belong to Rose, for she had ridden him ever since she had been at Towan, and considered him as her horse, though he had not been bought for her, or formally made over to her.

'I do not know exactly what the time is,' said Rose. 'I do not object to being a little late at church, so long as I am not very late. I smile when I enter during the Confession, I blush if I am at the First Lesson, I would hide my face in my handkerchief at the Second.'

'What is this?' shouted old Gaverock, bursting out of the hall (he was attired for church, with a beaver hat on his head, very rough). 'What have you got Phœbus here for? Rose, you are not going to ride. Run upstairs and take off that habit at once. You are going to walk with me. I can't have Phœbus ridden to-day.'

'The road is dirty,' said Gerans.

'What if it be?' asked Hender Gaverock, turning sharp on him. 'Dirty roads don't drown. She shall walk. Petherick!'—to the groom—'take the horse back to the stable.'

'Stop,' said Dennis, laying his hand on the bridle, as the man was about to obey his master.

'I will ride to church,' said Rose indignantly. 'I am in my habit ready. Gerans, help me up on Phœbus.'

'Mrs. Rose,' shouted the Squire, 'it won't do. Phœbus must not be used to-day. The shoe is too tight and pinches him. Run upstairs at once and change your habit.'

'I do not choose,' said Rose; 'I intend to ride.'

'I went into the stable yesterday, and saw he had been badly shod. I'll have the shoe off to-morrow,' said the Squire. 'Petherick, take him round.'

'A pinching shoe will not lame him,' argued Rose, her face clouding and colouring; 'the distance to the church is not so great as to injure him.'

'I have said it. That suffices,' exclaimed Gaverock.

Then Gerans came up to her, and said, 'Rose, do not be unreasonable, and lame Phœbus—you will spoil him for a ride in the week if you do.'

'Of course, it is I who am unreasonable, not Mr. Gaverock.'

'Take the horse round, Petherick,' ordered the Squire.

'I will ride,' said Rose angrily, brushing past her husband. 'Here, Gerans, help me into my saddle.'

Gerans hesitated. Whilst he hesitated, Dennis stepped quickly to her aid, and in a moment had raised her to her place on Phœbus.

'Rose! Rose!' shouted the Squire in tones of amazement and indignation.

'Thank you, Mr. Penhalligan,' said she, 'for coming to my aid when my husband hung back.'

Then she whipped Phœbus, and dashed away.

'Penhalligan!' shouted old Gaverock, very red in the face, 'How dare you——'

'Mr. Gaverock,' interrupted the doctor, 'I beg you will be careful what words you address to me. I am not a dog or a daughter-in-law to be addressed imperiously.'

'Do you know, sir? Do you know who I am—that—that——' Old Gaverock could not finish his inquiry; his anger choked him, and he ended his question with a splutter.

'I know one thing very well,' said the doctor—'that the wishes of Mrs. Rose ought to be a law to you, and to your son.' Then he turned to go.

'Come back! I want a word with you,' roared the angry man. 'By Golly! am I to be bearded by a pettifogging Sawbones?' He ran after Penhalligan, as the surgeon did not arrest his steps. He laid his hand on his arm, and said angrily, 'Do you know, sir, who I am? I am Gaverock of Towan, who is not accustomed to be disobeyed, and who will not, *will not*, in his old age, endure what he would not permit in his youth.'

'Mr. Gaverock of Towan,' said Penhalligan, the veins in his forehead swollen and black, his dark eye flashing, 'I knew that these seadowns harboured many strange creatures; I learn now that they harbour also bears.'

'I give you notice!' roared the old man, beside himself with wrath. 'I will turn you out of Nantsillan. You shall not inhabit it, and be my neighbour one day longer than I can help.'

'You cannot desire my departure more heartily than myself, from a place where the people are as savage as their surroundings.'

Then he walked along the church road, leaving Mr.

Gaverock bewildered with the new sensation of having been encountered by a man who did not fear him, and who gave him as good as he took.

Penhalligan found Rose in the lane over the brow of the hill. She had reined in Phœbus. He came on with long strides, his hat drawn over his eyes, and his head down to conceal his agitation. His face was livid with rage, and his eyes sparkled.

'Thank you, Mr. Dennis,' she said, when he was level with her. 'This is not the first time you have acted as my champion. Once, when my guardian wanted to sell the house at Kenwyn, again to obtain for me an allowance, and now to save me a dirty walk. I am afraid, however, that this last intervention has been a mistake—Phœbus really limps. Still, I would not for the world go back to Towan and confess myself in the wrong, and beaten.'

'No harm will follow,' said the young surgeon, 'if you walk the horse. I will pace at your side. If he trips, my hand will grasp the bridle at the bit.'

'Is the Squire following?'

'I do not know. I think not. I have given him something to digest that does not agree with his stomach.'

'I hope I have not been the occasion of a quarrel.'

'There has been a quarrel, and a friendship ripped, which can never be rehealed.'

'Not between you and Gerans?'

'The friendship was between the Squire, not his son, and me,' said Penhalligan after a pause, with reserve in his tone. Rose slightly winced.

'I thought you and Gerans were such fast friends,' she said timidly.

Penhalligan made no reply.

'I am sure that Gerans always speaks of you with the warmest regard.'

'He can afford to do so; he has lost nothing through me.'

After that, neither spoke for full ten minutes. Dennis walked near the head of Phœbus, looking gloomily before him, and Rose looked back at intervals nervously, along the Towan lane, wishing, yet at the same time not wishing, that the Squire would appear—wishing, because she did not desire to be alone with Dennis; not wishing, because she dreaded the old man's anger.

The morning was as beautiful as an early summer morning could be. The hedges were brilliant with fresh fern and bursting flowers. The honeysuckles were out, and as the path passed a bush with the trailing trumpet flowers, they traversed a zone of fragrance. The wild roses were blooming, white and blush pink.

The raindrops glittered on the sprays and grass. The may was not over, the thorn-bushes had shed most of their flowers in a white snow over the road, but flowers, turning pink before they fell, still hung in the bushes. When the sea was caught in glimpses through gates in the high hedge on the left, it was seen bluer than the sky, lost in it at the horizon, where a vapour hid the line of demarcation between sea and sky. The bells of the parish church, that lay in the valley, were wafted to their ears on the pleasant air.

Rose broke the silence, which was becoming painful. 'The Squire is a very determined man,' she said; 'one must bend or break who dares oppose him.'

Dennis turned his face, and looked up at her, like one awakening from a dream. 'Yes,' he said, and pressed his hat lower over his eyes; 'but all will not bend, or break. They will not, though he set his knee against them, and use his utmost strength for their destruction.'

'I hope—Mr. Penhalligan——' she began, and stopped the horse.

'There is no use hoping,' he answered, and urged Phœbus on. 'He has ordered me out of Nantsillan. It is his house, and he can do what he will with his own.'

'Oh, Mr. Dennis!' cried Rose turning pale, and her heart standing still. She could say no more. Her pallor was succeeded by a rush of blood to her face; she—by her persistence over a trifle had been the occasion of Dennis Penhalligan becoming homeless. The tears rose in her eyes. He did not look up at her; he walked on, with his hand on the bit and his eyes lowered.

Presently she said, in a choking voice, 'I am sorry—I am so, so sorry. I shall never forgive myself.'

He raised his eyes to her face, with a kindling glance, full of vehemence, and said, 'I am amply, most amply repaid by your pity.'

'Did not my husband put in a word for you with his father?' she asked with a tremulous voice.

Dennis laughed mockingly, bitterly. 'Not he. As the old one pipes, the young one whistles.'

Again ensued a silence. Rose's bosom heaved. The peal on the church bells changed.

'I am sorry, more sorry than I have words to say,' she murmured.

'Do not repeat that,' said Dennis earnestly, leaving the head of Phœbus and coming by her foot. 'I cannot bear it. I am unaccustomed to sympathy. What matters one more kick along the road of life? It is only one more among the many I have received. You—you also will have your sorrows. If the old man has not spared me, he will not spare you. You will come to understand Beethoven's Sonata in C minor.'

'I have my sorrows already,' she said, and a sob escaped her breast.

'You?' he exclaimed, standing still, and Phœbus also stood, either startled by his loud tone or involuntarily arrested by the hand of Rose on the bridle. 'You—you have sorrows! You, whom I have always associated with unclouded joy!'

'Have I not cause to be unhappy?' she asked, 'with a father-in-law who browbeats me, who will not allow me my way in anything, who treats my opinions with contempt, as though I were a child,'—her pity for herself grew as she recited her wrongs—'and with a husband who will never stand by his wife, and see that she is not wronged? He swore at the altar to uphold and cherish me, and this is how he keeps his oath! I am—I am very wretched. And now I have become the unwitting cause of a wrong done to you.'

'Do not name that—it is nothing. The rich always spurn the poor.'

'If I may not mention it, still I must think of it,' continued Rose; then recurring to herself, and her own wrongs, she said, 'What am I, a poor young girl, feeble, thoughtless, helpless—I look around for someone to help, comfort, advise me, to be a stay to me, and a friend, and I find none!'

'Do not say that—it is not true,' said Dennis in a deep thrilling tone.

'No,' she said, and her tears flowed, tears of pity for

herself. 'No, perhaps not. I have a friend. You have proved yourself one. You will always be my friend!'

'Your friend?' he asked, in a voice scarcely audible from emotion. 'Your friend! O Rose!'—and his flashing eyes met hers. He seized her hand, that hung down, and pressed it in his own. 'Your friend! ever! ever!'

He pressed her hand so vehemently, and, in his agitation, so inconsiderately, that she cried out from pain. Gerans had pressed that hand the evening before, and then she had exclaimed, 'You hurt me!' She remembered that now, and contrasted the fierce agonising squeeze of Dennis with the firm, but sparing pressure of the hand of Gerans, which had not hurt her, though she had affected to pretend it had.

The bells ceased pealing, and the single bell tolled, the token that service would begin in five minutes. The clergyman was already vesting.

Then Rose touched Phœbus with her whip, to make him hurry on. Her horse was really lame, and he could not go fast. Nevertheless, she reached the church in time, and took her place by herself in the Towan pew. The church was for the most part seated with old carved oak benches, such as remain in a great number of churches in the West to this day, and which were, fifty or sixty years ago, much more common. The bench ends were richly, even profusely carved, but in the Towan aisle they had been swept away to make room for a square baize-lined pew. This box had the advantage of screening Rose's face from the congregation, except when she stood up, and therefore of isolating her, and leaving her to her own thoughts. In her pew, Rose became cool and collected. The influence of the place made itself felt, and the solemn words of the service entering at her ear lodged in her mind.

By degrees she became aware that she had acted foolishly, if not wrongly. Rose loved Gerans, but she loved herself better. She was, naturally, a coquette, and the way in which she had been reared had fostered her vanity, love of admiration, and self-will. Her heart had not veered from Gerans to Dennis. She did not care for the latter, more than so far as his homage flattered her vanity.

She was provoked with Gerans; she was angry with him, but she loved him, not passionately, indeed, but sincerely. She was provoked with him, partly because he was

so amenable to his father, but also because he took his bliss so equably, and he was so undemonstrative in his love. It would do him good to be made jealous, to feel her displeasure. It would goad him into more energy in trying to win, and more solicitude to retain her affection.

These thoughts flew through her mind during the service. Then she recalled what had just taken place, and she felt she had gone too far with Dennis; she had no right to complain to any man of her husband, and to ask his support in the place of her husband. She felt this so strongly that as she came out of church she looked round for Dennis, and when she caught his eye deliberately removed the moss-rose bud from her bosom, and threw it down in the grass beside the path. She supposed that he had put the bud on her plate, and by throwing it away she intended him to understand that she refused his offer of friendship and declined his homage.

But Dennis, who followed, misread her mind. He stooped, and picked up the bud. He remembered the look she had cast him when she found it on her plate, and, now that she had thrown it down, he thought that she had cast it in his way for him to take and keep in remembrance of her, and as an encouragement.

A moment later Gerans appeared, leading Phœbus, from the church stable.

'Though I could not come to service, I came to assist you and escort you home,' he said. 'Petherick has assured me that the horse is lamed with bad shoeing.'

'Oh, thank you, thank you, Gerans, for coming,' she said without a look at Dennis, who supposed she had cast the rose to him, as a pledge of her regard, at the moment she saw her husband approach.

'Gerans, I am so pleased to have your company home.'

CHAPTER XXVIII.

BROKEN RESOLUTIONS.

Dennis had sneered at the idea of Gerans interfering with his father when the latter ordered the doctor to leave Nantsillan. Nevertheless, Gerans had interfered. He waited till Dennis was out of sight, and the old man's

choler was somewhat cooled, to say, 'You did not mean what you said, father. Dennis is not given notice to quit.'

'I will have nothing more to do with the fellow,' stormed the old Squire. 'He shall not set foot across my threshold: he shall not dose my wife; he shall not live on my land. I have given way to him too much; I have taken his opinion on sundry matters, not surgical and medicinal, and that has puffed him up with conceit. I'll do clean contrary to all he has advised. I will sell the Kenwyn estate. I will not make Rose any allowance. I will call in old Doctor Squance from Padstow, if your mother must have a doctor to humbug her.'

'My dear father, you will use your own discretion about these matters, later, when you have weighed them. Not now, when you are heated. As for Dennis, he must not be turned out of Nantsillan.'

'Not turned out! I'll rout him out with a red-hot poker if he stays a minute after his time.'

'You cannot, you must not. A doctor has had that cottage as long as I can remember, or you either.'

'Time some other trade should go into it.'

'There is no other house into which he can go.'

'Yes, there are two or three in the village.'

'No; single rooms in which he might be received as a lodger. But, remember, father, he has his sister with him. We must consider Loveday.'

'Why should we consider her? She is no relation.'

'My dear father,' said Gerans firmly, 'you must consider Loveday. She has been most kind and attentive to mother; scarce a day has passed without her coming here to see her——'

'And cocker her up in the delusion that she is ill. All your mother wants is a good routing up. She has nothing the matter with her but the vapours.'

'Whether Loveday has acted wisely or unwisely does not affect the case. She has acted as her kind heart prompted, and her visits have been of the greatest comfort to my mother. My mother loves her as if she were her own daughter—loves her far more, clings to her more, far more than to Rose. Rose is very good, but she does not suit mother, as Loveday suits her.'

'Your mother did without Loveday in times past, she must do without her in time to come.'

'Consider how useful she was when you were at your wits' ends with the servants, during our absence.'

'The maidens!' exclaimed the old Squire, firing up. 'I will give you an instance of their stupidity. I put out my wading boots, that cost me three guineas, to be rubbed over with tallow. Will you believe me, after larding the boots, they set them in a rat-run between the sink and the larder, and of course, in the morning, the rats had eaten the topleathers away—holes as big as a crown?'

'It is rarely that I have interfered with what you have determined,' said Gerans, returning to his point; 'but now I must remonstrate against your sending Dennis Penhalligan and his sister out of Nantsillan. The neighbourhood will cry shame on you if you do.'

'Let the neighbourhood dare to prescribe to me what I am to do with my houses and tenants!' said the Squire wrathfully.

'Your better feelings will not allow you.'

'I have said it,' exclaimed Hender Gaverock. 'What would the neighbourhood say if it heard that I had spoken a thing one day and withdrawn it the next? You ought to know that what I say I stick to.'

'I entreat you to forbear, father.'

'You are pertinacious. Why should I forbear? Show me a proper reason. Those you have given are chaffy, worthless.'

Then Gerans told his father the whole truth about Constantine and Loveday. The surprise, indignation, and rage of the old man knew no bounds. The story had been kept from him at first, lest be should burst forth into violence, and in his violence say words about his dead son which he would afterwards regret, but which would wound mortally his weak and failing wife. But now his wrath took another turn: he cast no blame on Constantine. He was at the moment occupied with the Penhalligans, and the secret now divulged exasperated him against them to the last degree. He was angry with Gerans for not having told him before, but he was furious against Loveday and her brother for thrusting themselves uninvited into relationship with his family. 'The sister of the beggarly Saw

bones!' he cried, walking up and down the gravel before the house, with huge strides, 'to dare to inveigle my son —my son into marriage with herself—the hussy who says I do not know women! I know them so well that I see through her machinations. Do you think, you fool, Gerans, that she came here out of Christian charity to your mother? Not a bit; she came to work herself into a place in this house, and when she had got into a snug corner, to be able to snap her fingers in my face and dare me to turn her out because she was my daughter-in-law.' Then he flew out in another direction. 'I don't believe it—not a word of it! The impudent wench! It was a love affair, and no marriage at all. She has deceived you, lied to you! I will not believe till I see the marriage lines. I will go to Nantsillan at once, and dare her to produce them. And that Sawbones brother! He thought to trade on his connection. To patch up his miserable practice with the recommendation of the Gaverocks his kinsmen, and send out his bottles of jalap and boxes of pills sealed with our crest! Golly! my blood boils. Gerans, I shall never forgive you for keeping this infamy concealed from me. Now, it is well that I know it. Not for another day, if I can help it, shall these beggars live in my house. That was the meaning of sending Loveday to Exeter, was it, where my son Con was in an office? A deep-laid scheme. A clever scheme. A scheme worthy of that black-eyed crafty hussy! But it shall not answer. I am glad I know it. I will go down at once and force her to tell me the truth. I always knew that Con was a milksop; I never thought him such a cursed fool! But Adam was no match for Eve, and so, I suppose, one must not wonder if Con fell a prey to another intriguing woman. I not know women! I know this, that they can combine the subtlety and wickedness of the serpent with the innocent outward appearance of the dove.'

In vain did Gerans strive to abate his father's fury, and divert him from his purpose of an immediate interview with Loveday. He entreated him to postpone the visit till the morrow. The old man would listen to no advice; in his headstrong temper and roused passion he rushed off in the direction of the cottage, shaking Gerans from him when he held his arm to detain him.

Then Gerans, greatly troubled at having made matters worse by telling his father what had so long been kept from him, resolved to go down to the church, meet Rose, and urge her to do what she could to appease the irate old man. Perhaps if she made her submission, his anger would abate.

He arrived at the church during the sermon. Instead of going in, he went to the stables provided for the horses of churchgoers from a distance, and brought out Phœbus, in readiness for Rose.

He helped her into the saddle, and led the horse away; he wanted to get ahead of the people who were about to stream along the same road. She, penitent for what she had done, did not look behind her, nor say a word to Dennis. She held the reins, and allowed her husband to urge on the lame horse.

'I see Phœbus does limp,' she said. 'However, he is not lame. When the shoe is taken off he will be right. The road is very muddy; I should not have liked to walk it. If your father had not been so peremptory, I might, however, have gone on foot, but I will not be ordered about—like you.'

She could not help it; even when penitent she must say something sharp, and also excuse herself, when half acknowledging that she had been in the wrong. When they were some way ahead of those coming from church in the same direction, and quite out of earshot, Gerans said, in a low tone, 'Rose, I want your help. I am afraid my father is much put out. I wish that you would tell him you are sorry that you took Phœbus. It will please him. You see the horse is unfit to be ridden.'

'He will be right when the shoe is off.'

'Do you know, Rose, that my father, in a fit of impetuosity, gave notice to the Penhalligans to leave their cottage? What is to be done? Where is poor Loveday to go? I wish you would intercede with father and get him to yield in this one matter.'

Rose's lips closed tightly. 'I suppose,' she said constrainedly, 'if "poor Loveday" is to go, that poor Dennis must go also.'

'Yes, of course; but that is not such a great concern.

But our dear Loveday!—I cannot bear to think of it. What will mother do? Where can Loveday go?'

'I should have supposed it of far more consequence that Mr. Dennis should be housed than "our dear Loveday."'

'Not at all,' answered Gerans, without perceiving that she was speaking ironically. 'He, as a man, can find lodgings somewhere, but she—there is no place where they could be taken in together.'

'And,' said Rose, 'it would be so very hard that Loveday should not be within a gunshot of Towan.'

'Yes, quite so,' answered Gerans. 'It would not do at all; she could not then be in and out of our house at all times.'

'That would be intolerable indeed.'

'I do not know—intolerable, but very inconvenient.'

'There I differ from you,' said Rose, coldly. 'I am not sure but that her frequent visits are inconvenient at present, and I can quite imagine that they may become intolerable.'

'I cannot see that,' Gerans replied, not in the least understanding his wife. 'My father is so exasperated that he may forbid her as well as Dennis the house.'

'It is, of course, of far more importance that Loveday should be at home there than that Mr. Dennis should be admitted.'

'Of course it is. My dear mother is so attached to her——'

'Your mother only?'

'No, all of us—you, I know, like her, love her dearly, and I—I am very fond of her.'

'I suppose that, as we are made one by marriage, we must share everything, even our attachments.'

'Yes, Rose, so it ought to be, and so I hope it is. Loveday is so good, noble, and true, that we must value and love her. You do both.'

He was wholly unconscious of the irritation his words caused. He spoke of Loveday's trouble, because he thought that would touch and move his wife more than any consideration for the doctor. He was devoid of jealousy himself, and had no conception that his wife could be jealous of him and Loveday. He regarded the latter so completely as a sister, that the thought that she could be

regarded in any other light by him never entered his head.

'My father has gone down to Nantsillan,' continued Gerans. 'I hope he will control himself; he was very excited when he went off. Loveday is there alone, I know.'

'You know, do you? How do you know that?'

'Because little Ruth came out of church. One or the other must remain at home to cook the dinner.'

'At *home*,' repeated Rose. 'Do you mean Nantsillan Cottage when you say, "at home"?'

'Yes,' he answered, and turned and looked at her. 'I do not understand you. Nantsillan is their home.'

'Oh! you spoke of it as home—as your home.'

'How can you so misinterpret me?' said Gerans. Then he sighed. It struck him that she was in a captious and unyielding mood, but he did not see the reason for it.

Phœbus went slowly on. Rose's cheeks burned. All her penitence and good resolutions were gone. She was angry with her husband for talking so persistently of Loveday. After they had gone on in silence a little way, Gerans stepped back, and, laying his hand on the crupper, said, 'Rose, dear, speak a word for them to father. He must not turn them out; they have had troubles enough without our adding to them—more troubles than you know. They are very poor, and have made a hard fight to get on. I fear this change would break their back.'

'So you creep behind my skirt, and thrust me on, because you dare not yourself interfere?'

'Rose, I have spoken, but my father will not listen.'

'That is false,' said Rose, vehemently; 'you said nothing. You had not the courage to stand up for a friend. You are a coward!'

'Rose!' exclaimed Gerans, withdrawing his hand from the back of the horse, and colouring—'Rose!' he repeated in a tone of reproach and pain and astonishment.

She did not spare him. She had no pity. She went on with flaming cheeks and sparkling eyes: 'Nothing is to be expected of a man who will not take the part of his own wife. No wonder if such a fellow is too timid to defend his own friend. I know some who would never have suffered me to be ill-treated and insulted, had I listened to

one or other of them, instead of to you. I wish I had never seen your face.'

Gerans turned deadly pale. He said, with quivering lips, 'Rose, you were not forced to take me.'

'No; but when I took you, I did not know you as I do now.'

Gerans had hold of her rein. He let go, and walked on. He did not look at her, he hung his head. Not two months had elapsed since they had been married, and his happiness was gone.

All the annoyances, disappointments, slights she had undergone, real or imaginary, justly or unjustly, in Towan, were alive and moving and gnawing in her soul. Another man would never have allowed her to be subjected to these. Dennis Penhalligan would have protected her from the slightest breath of offence. Dennis was not afraid of old Gaverock. He defied him to his face when Rose's pleasure was concerned. How Gerans had hung back—that morning at the door! How Dennis had sprung forward to lift her into her seat! They were men of different stamp. She began to cry. Gerans heard her, and her tears fell as fire-drops on his heart. He could not speak to her. He had nothing to say to her. She did not love him.

When they arrived at Towan, he handed her from the horse, but said nothing. He did not look at her. She went within. He walked away, with bowed head.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A SENTENCE OF EXILE.

Hender Gaverock, in his Sunday suit, but without his rough beaver hat, strode down to Nantsillan, opened the cottage door without knocking, and, entering the front room or little hall, shouted, 'Loveday Penhalligan, where are you? I want you. Come here.'

Loveday was in the kitchen. She came to him at once. She knew by his voice, and she saw by his face, that he was in a passion, and had lost all control over himself. Loveday wore a white apron, that covered her bosom and was fastened on her shoulders. Her gown was deep blue.

She looked very pretty with her rich dark hair, lustrous eyes, and oval, pale face. She was not alarmed, but she felt at once that she must exercise great discretion with a man who had no command over what he said or what he did.

'I am at your service, Mr. Gaverock,' said Loveday. 'Will you take a chair?' Then she seated herself.

'No, I will not,' he answered roughly. 'Why do you sit down? Stand up when I speak to you.' He could browbeat her better, face to face with her, than with her in a chair, by the hearth, showing him only her profile.

'You must excuse me, Mr. Gaverock. I know you will, you are so kind and considerate. I have been standing all the morning, and a moment in a chair is a boon.'

'I have heard a scandalous story,' said the Squire, pacing the little hall, and turning his great rough, shaggy head towards her, as he strode, with his hands behind his back, under the tails of his plum-coloured coat. 'I have heard a scandalous story, and I have come here about it.'

'Then, Squire,' said Loveday, gently, 'you have come to the wrong place.'

'I have not. I know what I am about, where I am.'

'You have come to call on a gentlewoman,' said Loveday, 'and are her visitor, in her parlour.'

Gaverock was somewhat abashed, but he was too highly incensed for a soft word to affect him more than momentarily.

'Mistress Loveday *Penhalligan*'—he emphasised the surname—'I have just heard a story about you and Constantine, outrageous, detestable, scandalous.'

'Excuse me, Mr. Gaverock, I have green gooseberries to pick.' She made him a slight bow, and withdrew into the kitchen. He continued striding up and down the hall, waiting for her. After a few minutes she returned, looked him full in the face, and reseated herself, with a dish of gooseberries in her lap, and put an empty pie-dish, for the stalks, on the table. She was so cool, so collected, that Gaverock was disconcerted. She fixed her honest dark eyes on him, and said, 'You have heard that Constantine and I were married in Exeter. It is true, but I did not wish that it should be known.'

'It is not true. I dispute it. Show me the certificate.'

'Mr. Gaverock,' she said, raising her head, 'I excuse those hasty and ill-considered words; but I will not suffer them to be repeated, nor endure words like them. I cannot show you the certificate, because I did not furnish myself with a copy. But I will write, or you can write, if you doubt my word of honour, and obtain a copy of the register from St. Sidwell's Church in Exeter.'

'I do not believe it. I will not believe it,' stormed the angry man; 'it is a disgraceful imposition. What took place between you and Con, you know best, but I will not allow——' She was gone. The basin of gooseberries was left on the table; she had quietly and easily withdrawn.

He paced the room again. It was full ten minutes before she returned, and resumed her place and dish of berries.

'How can I talk if you run out of the room every few minutes?' he asked.

'How can I stay when you forget to whom you are speaking?' she replied. 'I am your daughter-in-law. I did not seek the honour. I shrank from it. It was pressed upon me. I have endeavoured to keep the relationship a secret. I shall bring no dishonour on the name of Gaverock; that name, however, will be dishonoured by any man who bears it and fails to behave as a gentleman in the presence of a lady.'

'Do you mean to imply——' began Gaverock, threateningly.

'I imply nothing,' said Loveday, quietly; 'I state a fact that you yourself must admit. Would it not be dishonourable of a man who is a gentleman by birth and position to forget what is due to a lady, and address her in terms of insolence when she is alone, with no one by to protect her?'

Gaverock was very angry. He thrust his hands into his pockets and paced the room.

'You have not replied to my question,' said Loveday.

He would not answer.

'Mr. Gaverock,' she said, 'you want to talk to me, and I am ready to speak with you; but I will only consent to a conversation on these terms—that you sit opposite me, Mistress Loveday, and hold the pie-dish into which I put the gooseberry stalks.'

'I am not here to be made a fool of,' said the Squire.

'Nor am I here to waste valuable time. The gooseberries are to be made fool of, not the Squire of Towan. That is left to himself and his inconsiderate temper.'

She set a chair for him opposite herself, and held the back, waiting for him to occupy it. He shortened his tramp and his steps, hesitated, drew near the chair, went back, came again, and finally seated himself. Then she put the basin in his hands.

'What is this for?' he asked angrily.

'For the stalks of the gooseberries, and the little brown ends, which must not be allowed in a fool, or it spoils it. I dare say you know that by experience.'

'Miss Loveday,' said Hender Gaverock, 'you and your brother will have to turn out of this house. I have given him notice. I will have none of you in my neighbourhood any more. Your brother, madam, has defied me, *me*; interfered with me, *me*; and ——'

'Take care of the pie-dish!' she said as he flung himself back impetuously in the chair.

'And has called me a bear—me, *me*!'

'Well, Mr. Gaverock. Is there anything so dreadful and offensive in that? A bear is rough, tough, and indomitable. You do not pretend to be sleek as a greyhound; all your muscles are as hawsers, and who is there that has ventured to tame you?'

This recognition of his roughness, toughness, and indomitability, three qualities on which he prided himself, somewhat mollified the old Squire.

'And because of this, you are going to expel us from this house? This is not kind.'

'Not for this only,' answered Gaverock. 'I will not have the doctor trade on his relationship, and you establish a claim to be one of us.'

'Have we done so? Have we shown the smallest desire to do this? Who told you of my marriage? Not Dennis?'

'No, Gerans.'

'You have not heard anything about it from the neighbours,' said Loveday; 'it was I who begged Gerans to keep it secret. But for my urgency it would have been the talk of the county. If now the tidings spread, it will be through

you, not through me. Unless Gerans has told Rose, she is ignorant. The secret was in the hands of Mrs. Gaverock, Gerans, and Dennis.'

'My wife knows—and never told me!'

'She knows. Constantine had himself told her part of the secret; I confided to her the rest.'

'Women cannot keep secrets—it will spread like thistledown in a week.'

'You do not know women, or you would not say so. It has been known to Mrs. Gaverock since last autumn twelvemonth, when poor Constantine was drowned, and whom has she told? No one. Whom have I told? If the story circulate you will set it running.'

'I—I do not want it to get about. I would hush it up if possible. I am too vexed, too indignant—too ashamed.'

'It is I,' said Loveday, gently, 'who have cause to be ashamed, not you. And I am ashamed—deeply humbled, and there is not an hour of the day in which it does not weigh on me.'

'You!—it was an honour.'

'I do not see it so. I did wrong. I consented to marry Constantine privately, I will not reproach him; but I may say that I neither intended nor expected that any secret should have been made of the marriage, when once it had taken place. A secret *was* made of it, and I have had to suffer. I am suffering now from it. When poor Constantine was dead, I thought to bury my secret in forgetfulness. No advantage could come of divulging it. But as it has leaked out—it cannot be helped.'

'I do not want it to go farther. Why should we have this put into the mouths of half Cornwall?'

'Exactly—why should we? I do not ask for recognition. Dennis has no such desire. It lies with you to publish or suppress what has been confided to you.'

'Oh, I! It is no such honour to me——' Then with Loveday's calm face before him, full of dignity, and her soft eyes fixed on him, he became conscious that he was about to make a rude remark, unworthy of a gentleman.

He considered for a while. If he turned Dennis Penhalligan out of Nantsillan, no doubt the surgeon would go about complaining of the wrong done him by the man

whose son had married his sister. He would do the thing of all others most likely to publish the affair.

'Are you not treating us with undue severity,' said Loveday, 'in banishing us from this cottage? You know there is no other house in the place that we can have. You are therefore forcibly separating my brother and me, and breaking up our poor little home. A young man beginning professional life has not an easy time, and it is surely harsh to make it more painful to him than need be. My offence is not mine alone. Poor Constantine, who married me, was your own flesh and blood. If there be fault on my side, and I freely admit it, blame attaches to him also. Why should the burden of expiation fall on my brother and me alone? Why should your family bear none of it? My brother knew nothing of the marriage till Constantine's return, the ensuing autumn. He was not consulted. He was kept as much in ignorance as yourself. It is not right that he should suffer for what I have done.'

'He has offended me,' said Gaverock.

'How, I do not know,' Loveday said.

'Then I will tell you. Phœbus was ill-shod and like to go lame. Rose insisted on riding him to church, and when I forbade her, and she persisted, your brother took her part, and helped her into the saddle.'

'He acted wisely,' said Loveday. 'Rose is wilful, and resolved to have her own way. She will lame Phœbus, and find that she cannot ride him again for many days. She will be forced to admit that you were right, and that she was wrong. Henceforth she will show you more deference. She has been taught in the only way she could be taught, by experience, that your orders are not capriciously given, but rest on common-sense.'

'There is something in that,' said the Squire.

'My brother saw that clearly, and he allowed her to have her own way, that she might return to Towan ashamed of her obstinacy. Sunday is a day for acquiring moral lessons.'

'I will tell you what it is, Miss Pen——' He stopped, corrected himself, and recommenced his sentence. 'I will tell you what it is, Loveday. I am more incensed against you than against him. His conduct, as you say, is capable of being given a different interpretation from that I gave

it; and what he said may be accepted as complimentary, though I cannot say I thought he spoke it with that intention. Still, as his manners are peculiar, and unformed, I will suppose that he did mean to compliment me. I admit that I am rough, vigorous, and tough—I am that, as every sane man on this coast knows, and no man has yet been able to throw me, though I have wrestled with the best men in Cornwall. But I am a man of my word. When I have said a thing, I stick to it. I have said that I would turn you out of Nantsillan, and so I will. I could never look Gerans in the face, never order him about, if I were to go back from what I have said.'

'You may put down the pie-dish, Mr. Gaverock,' said Loveday; 'I have finished the gooseberries.'

'Ah,' growled the Squire, 'I had green gooseberry pudding on Whitsunday, but the maidens were not looked after, and to save themselves trouble did not pick the gooseberries. But that is neither here nor there. We are not talking of gooseberries. As I said, I stick to my word, and I have said I would turn you out of Nantsillan. Gerans will expect it. I expect it of myself. But—there are two of you. You are the chief offender. If you will go, I will not be hard on the doctor. He, at all events, is not a relation; but you—if your story be correct, and I suppose I must admit that it is—you stand to me in the surprising and close relationship of daughter-in-law. Now I am not prepared for this. It will take my mind some time to get used to the idea. I shall have to determine on a course of action. You must go. It is best for you. It is necessary for me. I do not say, Go away for ever, but go away for awhile—for a twelvemonth, till I have had time to digest this startling piece of news, and have decided whether to recognise you or not. If you will consent to this, I will retreat so far as to allow the doctor to remain here. This understanding must be come to between us, that not one word is said of the—the circumstance just told me, this startling news sprung on me, when so unprepared to receive it. No one must know of it till I have made up my mind what is to be done, and if, at the end of a twelvemonth, I refuse to acknowledge you, then you and your brother must accept my refusal as final. If you choose to

come to my terms, I will say no more about his vacating Nantsillan.'

'I accept the terms,' said Loveday. 'I accept them heartily. I am willing to go. I believe it will be best for myself, as you say, though on other grounds. I will go somewhere, and earn a little money, so as to be a help to poor Dennis.'

As Squire Gaverock walked back to Towan, he said to himself, 'That young woman has some sense in her—for a woman. She did not forget what was due to me; she maintained a proper respect. If she only had money, I would rather have her as my daughter-in-law than Miss Vanity Scatterbrain, who has not yet learned her place.'

In about half an hour after the Squire had gone Dennis entered the cottage.

'Oh, Dennis!' said Loveday, who came to him from the kitchen on hearing his step, 'Mr. Gaverock has been here whilst you were at church. He has been told all. He is highly incensed against me. He was very angry at first with you, but that is passed away.'

'He has given me notice to quit the house,' said Dennis. He had not raised his eyes to his sister on entering, and now he looked furtively at her. He saw that her eyes were swimming with tears. 'Is that what has made you cry?'

'No, Dennis; he will allow you to remain, but I must go.'

'You! Why?'

'Because of my marriage with Con. He cannot make up his mind whether to recognise it or not; and he has made me promise to go away for a twelvemonth. But he will not disturb you.'

Dennis drew a long breath. He did not exhibit much concern at the prospect of losing his sister.

Suddenly, after drying her tears, Loveday exclaimed—

'Dennis, what is that rose in your buttonhole? Where did you get it?'

He looked away, as her searching eyes were on his face.

'Dennis, I know that rose. It is from our garden; there is but one.'

'Well,' he said roughly, 'if you know the rose, why do you ask about it?'

'Because—oh, Dennis!—I gave it to Rose Gaverock. That is, I carried it up to Towan, and put it in her plate at the breakfast table. How came you by it?'

'I picked it up,' he answered, with a sullen look and impatience in his tone.

She watched his face eagerly with alarm and pain.

'Oh, Dennis,' she said, 'why did you pick it up?'

He turned angrily on her, and said—

'Loveday, this is intolerable. I will not stand here to be catechised.'

'Dennis, dear brother'—Loveday spoke in a low, pleading tone, and put her hand on him—'you picked it up because it was hers, because she had worn it. I see it in your face. This must not be. Dennis, she is lost to you, she belongs to Gerans; and you must not, without sin, lay a thought to her. Dennis, dear Dennis, I have noticed that you have not crushed and cast out of your heart the love you bore her. But it is a duty. You must be true, and good, and honourable, and a Christian. Oh, Dennis'—she pressed on him, and put up her other hand beseechingly on his arm—'let me take the rose away; and as I pluck it, be brave, and pluck every thought of her out of your heart.'

She put her delicate, slender fingers to the lappet of his coat. He sprang back, cast her off, his dark eyes glared, and his brows contracted.

'Have you done with this preaching?' he said. 'I have borne from you more than I will endure for the future. It is well you are going. I am sick of prying and peeping eyes; go as soon as you can. I had rather be alone. I am tired of your officious care.'

'Oh, Dennis!' she said, and covered her eyes; then fled the room, and buried her face on her pillow. She had lost her brother's love, and was banished alike from her home and his heart.

CHAPTER XXX.

SAMPHIRE.

During the early dinner Gerans was silent. Rose, on the other hand, was lively. She did her utmost to let Gaverock, the father, and her husband see that she was in good spirits, and quite unaffected by what had taken place. But on this occasion she had an uphill scramble. Hender Gaverock was not in his jovial, boisterous humour; and Gerans said nothing. Moreover, Rose was not well at ease with her conscience, and felt disposed rather to cry than to laugh. This, however, was the last thing she would allow either of the men to suspect. Mrs. Gaverock came in to dinner, but she was never to be relied upon to furnish topics of conversation and keep up a flagging talk. She seemed, on this occasion, to be conscious that something had gone wrong, and to be more than usually depressed by this consciousness. She was a quiet, faded old lady; very ready to do her duty in the house as far as her physical powers allowed; but she was too diffident of her knowledge, too narrow in her interests, too much afraid of her husband, to be of much use solidly. She was a good listener, a kind sympathiser; and in opinions she always agreed with the last speaker, because she never could see more than one side of any question at a time. She looked from her husband to Gerans, and then to Rose, with perplexity and timidity, afraid to ask if anything was the matter and unable to explain their moods. That Rose's hilarity was put on she knew by her feminine instinct; but in her innocent, humble heart, she attributed it to her goodness in desiring to brighten a dull meal and recover the spirits of her father-in-law and husband. She was struck with admiration at Rose's ability and energy, an ability and energy of which she was herself devoid and incapable.

After dinner, Rose gave her mother-in-law one arm, and Gerans gave her one on the other side, and they helped her back to the sofa in the parlour, where she had her Bible and Church Service and a volume of Blair's Sermons on a tea-table at her side. She had gone religiously through

the form of prayer for the morning, and would do the same in the afternoon with Rose to help her, and such of the servants as could not be spared to go to church. The performance was dreary and not very improving. The Psalms were divided among those who could read, each taking a verse, and in the case of the servants hashing it, and in the case of the scullery-maid spelling it and making nonsense out of it. Rose galloped away with her verse, her Truro maid trotted with hers, Mrs. Gaverock's verse went along at an amble, but the rest were in various conditions of crawl and tumble. The Lessons were gone through in the same way; and no one, when it came to her turn, had the faintest idea of what she was reading about. However, it was all well intended.

Gerans withdrew. His mother cast a sad look after him. She feared that religion was losing its hold on her son, as he shrank from these spirit-deadening exercises. Rose would have run away had she dared, but she had sufficient grace to be sensible that it would be kind and dutiful to remain.

'We must allow the servants time to dine and wash up,' said Mrs. Gaverock, 'and then we will begin.'

'Yes,' answered Rose, with her mouth down at the corners. She was standing by the window, looking out, watching Gerans as he left the house. There was a dejection about him—affecting his walk, his bearing, his face—she had never seen in him before. She knew the cause, and she relented towards him, for she really did love him.

'What can be the matter with father and Gerans?' asked Mrs. Gaverock, as she turned over the pages of Blair in quest of a sermon that would do to read to the maids. 'They were neither of them in their usual spirits at dinner. Do you know the reason?'

'No, aunt.'

'To-morrow is Gerans' birthday. Have you prepared something for him? I have knitted him a pair of mitts, though I do not think he will wear them. Still, he will value them. They will tell him he has been thought of.'

'I have nothing, aunt. I forgot about his birthday.'

'Which of these two sermons will do best, Rose? Just cast your eye over them and give me your opinion.'

'My dear aunt, either will do equally well: they are

just like each other and all the rest; the same words only differently arranged. And as for ideas, they are, like the raisins in the cakes uncle complains of, conspicuous by their absence. When I was at school we called these plum-loaves—milestone cakes—because of the distance between the raisins. As for the ideas in the sermons, the distance between them is to be measured by geographical miles, which are seven hundred and ninety-five feet and four-fifths longer than the statute mile.'

When the service was over, Rose's feelings were in an irritated condition. She heartily wished that Goliath had killed David, and prevented him from writing Psalms; and that with the Destruction of Jerusalem the First and Second Lessons had gone to make the blaze brighter.

Gerans returned somewhat later. The service had lasted quite an hour and a half. Every verse spelled and made nonsense of by the scullery-maid had occupied three minutes. Rose was sitting by the drawing-room window, looking out for his return. She saw him arrive with head down.

'He seems still very unhappy,' thought Rose. 'Perhaps I was a little too sharp with him.' Her heart beat fast.

Mrs. Gaverock said something, and Rose answered incoherently.

The drawing-room window was open. Would he come to it?—lean his elbow on the sill, and stand there and speak to her? If he would come, she would address him cheerfully, and give him a tender look, which would make him forget any hasty word she might have spoken. But Gerans did not turn his head and look towards the parlour window. She heard his steps in the hall, and listened. He would come along to the parlour to his mother and her. He did not do so. Then a hard look came on her face. If Gerans had not noticed her at the window, it was his duty to come after her into the room where she sat. She was convinced that Gerans did not choose to see her, and she threw up her head haughtily. If he did not want a reconciliation, neither did she. If he would not apologise to her, she would not go out of her way to seek him.

'I hear Gerans in the next room,' said Mrs. Gaverock. 'Call him to me, Rose.'

Rose had to be twice asked to do this before she complied. Then she went to the door and said coldly, 'Your mother wants you.'

'I will come,' he said, and entered the parlour.

'Gerans,' said the old lady, 'what is this I hear about the samphire picking? Are you going to-morrow?'

'Yes, mother; it is in condition now. Loveday wants to pickle some and send it to her cousin in Exeter, and Rose will want some for this house, and Madam Loveys also.'

'Loveday first, and I only next,' said Rose shortly, frowning.

'No!—not so. Dennis and Anthony join me. Loveday always has her store in now, and so do you, mother. I told Anthony and Dennis about it yesterday. We may as well all go together. Indeed, we must help each other; the rocks are so precipitous that we cannot get the samphire without a rope.'

'Oh, Gerans, be careful!'

He laughed, but not cheerfully—not his usual careless, gay laugh. 'I shall be careful enough; but if I am over the edge of the cliff, it lies with Dennis and Anthony to be careful. Dennis cannot go over an edge, he turns giddy at a precipice; and Anthony is so slow and clumsy.'

'Do they hold the rope?'

'Yes, attached to my waist. If they let go, don't expect me home to-morrow, for home I shall not come.'

'Take some one else. Take Petherick or Jago.'

'My dear mother, have no fear. There are not two more powerful young men in these parts than Dennis and Anthony, and *they* will not let me go, they love me too well.'

'Yes, but they may lack nerve.'

'Dennis has nerve. The only fear is lest Anthony should go to sleep at his rope end.'

'Oh, Gerans!' exclaimed his mother. 'Do not be angry with me. All the samphire in the world is not worth your life. Give up this expedition. My mind forebodes ill.'

He stooped over her and kissed her.

'You are weak and nervous,' he said. 'Have no uneasiness about me. I have none for myself.'

As he went out of the room he cast a glance at his wife. Rose stood with averted face.

'Do you know what you are looking at?' asked Mrs. Gaverock, following the direction of her eyes. 'On that window-jamb is marked the height of Gerans on each of his birthdays till he was full grown. He will never stand higher now than the highest score; but—he may lie lower than the lowest. It was so with Con.' Then her tears flowed.

On the morrow, the three young men—taking with them a coil of new rope, bought recently at St. Ives, and sure to stand any strain put on it—went along the cliffs together, above the sea, in quest of samphire.

The samphire derives its name from Saint-Pierre, because it is ripe and ready to be pickled about St. Peter's Day—that is, June the twenty-ninth. It is a fleshy stalked and leaved plant, with pale whitey-green flowers like those of the fennel. It only grows on such crags above the sea as the gulls delight to haunt, above the lash of the waves, but ready to sip of though not to be engulfed in their brine. It sprouts out of rocky crevices in thick clusters, enlivening the bald cliff faces where nothing else will grow. Not one of our native plants can at all compare with this in flavour when pickled with vinegar and spices. It is pleasantly aromatic both in odour and taste, and very succulent. As it was highly prized at one time, those who lived near the coast collected it and sent it to their friends inland.

Gerans wore light shoes, without nails in the soles; a short jacket; and a sower's pouch slung round him, in which to put the gathered plants as they were plucked. He was not in the cheerful humour which was common to him. The samphire-picking he greatly enjoyed on former occasions, and he was wont to go forth singing to his dangerous pursuit. There was pleasure in hanging halfway down a cliff with the rolling blue-green sea curling and foaming underneath; and to feel the sun strike back from the rocks to which he clung; and to inhale at every inspiration an air that went down into his lungs as the vapour of the elixir of life. It was pleasant to be among the wheeling gulls, the kittiwakes with their scarlet beaks, the great cormorants with metallic plumage, the gannets—the young black and white speckled and the older white

with blue-grey faces—the glossy black, scarlet-stockinged chuff: to have these birds wheeling and screaming around, and to invade their nests, and see their startled young, it was worth the risk of the descent. It was pleasant to be among the scented glassy-stalked samphire, and the pink dancing tufts of the thrift. On a bright day, nothing gave so great a sense of light, and sparkle, and buoyancy as a swing down the face of the sea cliffs after samphire. But this morning Gerans was not himself. It was his birthday, and Rose had forgotten to congratulate him on it. He was going forth on a perilous enterprise, and she had manifested no concern about it. He had expected every moment that morning from his waking that she would recollect what day it was, and would come smiling to him, put her arms round his neck, and wish him many happy returns of it. A very little love on her part would have made him forgive, if he could not wholly forget, her words of yesterday. But she gave no token of relenting. It was certain that she loved him no more. She had taken him, not knowing her own mind; and now she had discovered, when too late to retract the step, that she did not either respect or love him. He had noticed, ever since his return from Truro with her, that she had become estranged from him bit by bit, but he had hoped that the gulf might close instead of widening farther. Now he knew that he must abandon this hope. He felt no bitterness towards her; he loved her as much as ever, possibly more. He had no suspicion of her heart having turned from him to another. He did not suppose that she was still the coquette, demanding, insisting on admiration, that she had been before. He knew that he had forfeited her love by his submission to his father and, he supposed, from deficiencies of manner, and mind, and culture, which she observed, but of which he was ignorant.

Dennis was not in a conversational mood either, and Anthony only talked with an effort. Consequently, the three walked along the cliffs in silence, only broken by remarks about spots where it was likely that samphire would be found, where it was observed growing in accessible spots, and where it was safe to descend.

After some little discussion, a place was fixed upon where Gerans had gone down in former years. This was

on the face of the cliff called Cardue Point, pierced by the Iron Gate.

The day was most beautiful. The sea was like a great sapphire, full of changing lights, and flashes, and shades of colour. The turf was thickly covered with thrift, running through every change of hue from pink to silvery white. Here and there a delicate little blue flax-flower shook in the wind—a flower so delicate, that when picked it shed its leaves at once.

'Here,' said Gerans, as he fastened the rope round his waist; 'I will go down the cliff in this place. I know that the samphire is abundant here, though one cannot see it from the top, as the edge slightly curves over.'

'Mind your footing, and the knot,' said Dennis. 'A fall here would end your happiness in this world.'

Gerans sighed. 'I do not know but that it would be as good a way out of one's troubles as any.'

'Troubles!' exclaimed Dennis, scornfully. 'You, a Gaverock, with everything you can wish for, have no right to speak about troubles.'

'But I have troubles,' answered Gerans, laying his hand on his heart. 'There is a skeleton in every house.' He looked up at Dennis, and their eyes met; only for a moment—and Dennis knew by the sadness in those of Gerans that Gerans was aware that he was not loved by his wife. A wave of hot blood rolled through his veins, making sparks flash before his eyes, then darkness came over them. It passed, and he had regained his composure. But his heart beat faster, a triumphant feeling swelled in his breast. Rose did not love Gerans, never had loved him; she writhed in her marriage bonds. If she loved any one, it was himself, Dennis Penhalligan.

'Ready?' asked Gerans.

'Ready you are,' replied the other two, and Gerans crept over the edge, his white seed-pouch disappearing first, then his face, and last, the fingers clinging to the turf. As the fingers, first of one hand, then of the other, left their hold, the thought rushed through Penhalligan's brain, 'Now the man who stands between you and happiness is in your power. What does he care for life? He would thank you to let him fall.'

A crowbar had been driven into the turf, and the rope

looped round that. Anthony payed it out as it was wanted; Dennis knelt on one knee, with the heel of the other foot driven into the turf, grasping the cord with both hands, one before the other. At the farther end, the unseen end, was Gerans, creeping down the face of rock, holding to projections with his hands or resting his feet on ledges. At times the strain on the rope was great, at others not at all. The two young men were forced to be on the alert, as they could see nothing of their comrade, and were obliged to be ready to have the rope jerked violently at any moment.

Once while the strain was greatest, and they knew that Gerans was swinging almost with his entire weight over the spiked rocks and foaming surf, the temptation to let go came over Dennis with such power that he had great difficulty in conquering it. The temptation was not of the will, or of malice, to destroy Gerans; it was the numbing fear of letting go and so becoming his murderer, that almost took the power out of his muscles. The sensation was much the same as that which is felt when one stands on the verge of a precipice. One feels impelled to cast oneself down, not from any wish to do so, but from an all but irresistible fascination, which the thought of falling exercises on the mind. Dennis saw Gerans dashing from his foothold, whirling down through the air to the sea below, and the sight of this descent, to his imagination, unnerved him; his fingers trembled and began to relax, whilst a sweat of agony burst from his brow and lips and studded them with great drops.

Whether he could have mastered the weakness, had it continued, cannot be said. Fortunately, Gerans obtained foothold on a ledge, relaxing the cord, then shouted, and shook it, and Dennis and Anthony began to draw him up, he helping himself with his hands and knees and toes.

He brought up his pouch full of samphire. Then he cast himself on the turf to rest a few minutes, and Dennis was glad of the relief.

'I have seen plenty growing a little way to the right,' said Gerans. 'Quite a bed of it. I will go down there in a minute.'

'Give us more than a minute for rest,' said Dennis.

'Both Anthony Loveys and I have need of breathing time, besides, I have had a sharp pull on the rope, and it has made my hands tender.'

'Tender or not, they must be tough enough to sustain me,' answered Gerans. 'My life depends on them.'

'Do not fear for me,' said Dennis, gravely. But though he spoke boldly he had lost confidence in his nerve.

'I am ready for you when you like,' said Anthony. 'My skin is like leather.'

The three walked along the verge to the spot indicated by Gerans. The excitement of the descent, and the herb-picking, had driven from him his despondency, and as he went over the edge his face was smiling and hopeful as usual.

'For God's sake be careful now,' were his last words. 'Don't go to sleep, Anthony. There is a tickle (difficult) bit where I cannot plant a foot.'

'The bar is well driven in,' said Anthony Loveys.

'Yes,' said Dennis, looking over his shoulder. 'But the bar is nought without the grip on the rope slewed about it. Hold hard.'

The two young men exerted their full strength; with heels driven into the turf they were firm as rooted trees. The cord was given a turn about the bar, and the bar was driven into the ground slanting steeply away from the direction in which was the strain; but the soil on the surface of the rock was not of sufficient depth to allow of its being forced down to any considerable distance. It would have been quite insufficient alone to have supported the weight of a man. With the rope looped round it, it materially assisted in sustaining the burden. Very cautiously the young men let out length to allow of the descent of Gerans. He was hanging now quite free from the cliff over jagged points of slate and the waves, torn and tattered as they rushed over and in and out among the blades of rock. According to his estimate, he must descend sheer fifty feet before he reached the shelf on which the samphire grew in a green belt, rankly.

How much rope had been payed out, how long they had been slowly lowering Gerans, neither Dennis nor young Loveys knew exactly, when suddenly a white liver-spotted dog, limping, ran up, and jumped over the rope behind

Penhalligan, who did not see it, drawing its lame cold foot across the back of Anthony's hand.

Anthony, startled, and, in his surprise, forgetful of what he was about, let go his hold to wipe away the clammy moisture, like the track of a slug, left by the mongrel dog's foot on his hand.

Instantly the rope flew away, jerking the bar out of the ground, and throwing up the turf, rushing through the hands of Dennis. A cry was heard, whether that of Gerans or of a gull, neither knew, neither heeded. Dennis threw himself full length on the cord, gripping it with all the force he could concentrate into the muscles of his arms, but the weight and fall at the farther end drew him along the turf to the edge of the precipice. In another moment he would have been over as well as Gerans; but the end of the coil was fortunately round Loveys, and, as it ran out, caught him, and he cast himself, or was flung across the course of the pull, instead of in the line of it, like Dennis, and the rope was arrested by his weight and resistance.

Then Penhalligan retreated backwards, hand behind hand, till he was a safe distance from the edge. He was quivering in all his muscles, and sick at heart; he had seen over the cliff the spikes and razor-blades of slate far below waiting to cut and kill him. Slowly the two young men drew in the rope till Gerans was safely landed on the top. He was white and agitated.

'It was my fault,' said Anthony, when Gerans cast himself on the turf, speechless, beside Dennis, who also was unable to speak. 'I thought I heard a low bark behind me, and a moment after saw the flap of a coat in the wind, and just then a spotted dog like that of the pedlar at the Goose Fair ran over my hands, and took the power out of them, just as if I'd had a shock from a sea-nettle.'

'But for Penhalligan I would have been dashed to pieces,' said Gerans. 'Give me your hand, Dennis; I thank you for my life.'

The doctor held out his hands. They were covered with blood; the rope had flayed his palms in flying through them, and the backs and knuckles were cut and bleeding from the stones over which they had been drawn.

'Don't thank me. I cannot shake hands,' said Dennis, coldly. 'I saved my own life.'

Anthony Loveys looked about and behind him. 'I can't make it out at all,' he said. 'I see no one here, and no dog either. Yet, if it were the pedlar, he could not have left the cliff by this time.'

'Bah, Anthony!' said Gerans. 'It was a dream. You fell asleep over your work.'

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE DEER'S WELL.

Gerans returned to Towan with the samphire for Rose. He went in search of her at once, and found her in her own room. He was too agitated to observe her mood.

'Rose,' he said; 'as I began life on this day, I almost ended it. I have been nearer my end than I ever was on any former occasion. I owe my life to Dennis. Anthony let go the rope, and I was being whirled down to death, when Dennis arrested it, and saved me. He will not come in; he is washing his hands at the Deer's Well. He has torn and cut them. Take him some rag. I will go to my mother. I do not want her to know anything about it, and Anthony is below.'

Rose looked at him with anxiety, and trembled. He did not kiss her; he hurried away to his mother, afraid of Anthony Loveys in his stupidity letting out the danger he had been in.

Rose got some pieces of soft old rag, and a bottle of Friar's balsam, and, without putting on her hat or bonnet, went out through the old deer paddock to the well. This well lay on one side of the house, in a depression, with old thorn trees growing about it, over-arching and plaiting their branches together like clasped fingers across the spring. The well itself was built up of grey lichened stones, and had originally been gabled like that we have described at Welcombe, but many of the stones were out of place, and it was ruinous. Still, the trough that received the water was sound and free from fallen stones, and indeed from it most of the water used in the house was derived. As it was in a depression, those standing at the well were invisible from the house, the roofs of which and the chimney-tops

could be seen at the well, but no window commanded the Deer's Well.

Rose hurried down the slope over the fresh and springy turf, sown thick with daisy and buttercup, and found Dennis on his knee at the spring, holding his hands in the water to arrest the blood and cleanse earthy particles from the wounds.

She turned her face away as she held out the balsam and the linen. 'Do not let me see blood,' she said, 'or I shall faint. But tell me, are you really very—very much hurt?'

Dennis stood up, and taking the rags from her hands, sopped them in balsam and fastened them round his fingers where most cut and abraded.

'Nothing to signify,' he said. 'Perhaps now that I have been hurt myself, I shall have what I hitherto lacked, sympathy for sufferers.'

'And you saved Gerans' life! How I thank you.'

'I saved my own at the same time. He nearly dragged me over the edge of the cliff. I cannot fasten this kerchief round my hand; would you object to do it? You will see no blood. The stains that you see on the wrapper are those of balsam.'

He held out his right hand. The left was bound up. He had put the white strips over the palms and knuckles, but with the bound left hand he was unable to knot them. Rose took the ends, and drew the loose strips tighter.

'Do I hurt you?' she said, raising her blue eyes to his face.

'Yes, always. But I cherish my pain.' His dark orbs met hers, and she dropped her eyes hastily.

How pretty she was in her white dress, gathered rather high, according to our modern notions, below the bosom, and falling plain to a set of frills of the same material as the dress, at the bottom. About her neck was thrown a forget-me-not blue kerchief, tucked into her breast, where the gown was edged with a broad double frill, like that on the skirt. Her golden curly head was exposed to the full blaze of the sun, which seemed to revel in the tangle of burnished beautiful hairs, and produce flakes and glints of light and colour among them.

Dennis's pulses beat. She looked so young, so girlish, so slender and sweet—she could not be regarded as a married

woman, with that childish, coquettish face, and those laughing blue eyes, and the little compressed cherry-red lips, that seemed made to laugh and kiss, and could not express a serious thought, or quiver with pain.

Her hands trembled, for she was nervous, whilst tying the bandages. She felt that his eyes were on her head.

'It would have been well, perhaps,' said Dennis, 'if we had both gone over the edge together, Gerans and I, and so there had been at once an end of two broken lives.'

'Broken!' she glanced up surprised, caught his deep look again, and resumed her work on his hand, with her eyes on the rag.

'Broken and miserable' he said.

'I know,' said Rose, 'that you have had many disappointments. I know that you have not been appreciated according to your merits, and that you are unhappy, because disappointed; but Gerans—why should you speak of him as having a broken life?'

'Because, where he looked for happiness, he met with disappointment.'

Then the blood shot through every artery of Rose's body, and crimsoned her face and throat and temples. Her fresh lips tightened and lost their cherry redness. She misunderstood him. She thought he meant that Gerans had loved Loveday, but had been unable to marry her, perhaps because his father would not permit it. He had taken herself because old Hender Gaverock had ordered him; but he could not draw his heart away from Loveday, therefore he was miserable, and his life broken.

Penhalligan, who watched her intently, saw the tumult in her soul, and misinterpreted it. He thought that in it he saw an acknowledgment that he was right. She did not love, she did not even care for Gerans, to whom she was fatally linked. What had been her first words on coming to him? Had she not spoken to him of himself, and only afterwards of Gerans? To his passion-distorted mind, such a small matter as this had its significance.

'Loveday——' began Rose, and then the words died away on her lips. She trembled. She let go the bandage, which was now tied. She did not look up, she clasped her hands before her, and watched the water that flowed away from the Deer's Well.

'Loveday,' said Dennis after a pause, 'Loveday is going away. She leaves Nantsillan and me for a twelvemonth.'

'Loveday going!' exclaimed Rose in surprise, and with a leap of her heart in pleasure

'Yes,' he answered. 'Loveday is going away—directly. You will not see her again for a year.'

'But—why?—for what reason?'

'The Squire wishes it. He has extorted from her a promise that she will go.'

'But why?—tell me, why?'

'Squire Gaverock has his reasons. If he has not mentioned them to you, it is not for me to repeat them.'

Rose said no more. She stood, buried in thought, and now there was no laughter in her eyes, no dimples in her soft cheeks, little colour in them, and the merry lips were agitated with distress.

'The Squire thought it best that she should go. So do I.'

'And Gerans?'

'He was not consulted.'

She understood the reason of the banishment of Loveday; she could see all as clearly as though she had been told everything. The Squire had discovered, what was obvious to her, that Gerans was still attached to Dennis's sister; therefore for Loveday's sake, for the sake of Gerans, and of herself, Rose, he had advised that she should go. Then it was to be hoped that, in her absence, Gerans would cease to think of her, and that his heart would incline to his wife.

It was unfortunate that Rose had not been told of the marriage to Constantine. Gerans had not confided it to her, because he did not feel justified in doing so against the wishes of Loveday, and when the old Squire heard of it, 'Not a word to Rose,' he said, 'or her wagging tongue will publish what I want to keep quiet. I know women too well to entrust them with secrets.'

Rose was hurt, and was incensed. The tears welled up into her eyes, and her bosom heaved fast; but she tried to conceal her emotion from Dennis, or, at least, to disguise the occasion of it.

'That is very hard upon you,' she said; 'what will you do without your sister, to keep house for you?'

'I have had harder things to bear than that,' said Dennis.

She was struggling with herself. She tried hard to control her agitation; but she was unaccustomed to self-restraint.

'When is Loveday going?' she asked, with a fluttering mouth, and a voice full of tears.

'In two days—at latest. To-morrow if she can. She has already written to her cousin at Exeter to expect her.'

She put up her hands to her mouth, and pressed her knuckles to her lips to arrest their quivering.

'There is that matter of the piano,' said Dennis. 'Loveday undertook to repay the sum you advanced upon it. She will be better able to do so now than if she remained here. She will look out for a situation in which she can earn some money, a situation suitable for a gentlewoman,' he explained.

'Say nothing about that,' entreated Rose, putting out her hand to wave away all mention of money. Then a great sob burst from her bosom, and she gave way to a flood of tears. 'I am so unhappy! so unhappy!' she gasped, to excuse this outbreak.

Instantly Dennis seized her hand, drew her to him, clasped her in his arms, and kissed her lips and wet cheeks, fiercely, passionately.

Rose recovered herself, and strove with him, crying, 'Let go! Leave me!' flaming in her cheeks, and drawing back. Then both heard a cry. Dennis relaxed his grasp of her, and both looking up, saw Loveday standing on the path that descended to the well, standing as one frozen.

Rose shook herself free and fled past Loveday, without a word, and ran into the house, to her own room, and locked herself in. Dennis turned deadly white. 'Peeping, prying again!' he said; 'I shall count the hours till I see your back.' As he went by he thrust her from him roughly, with a look so angry, so charged with dislike, that Loveday covered her face and moaned. She was too deeply wounded and shamed to weep.

Loveday had come to Towan to see Mrs. Gaverock and to break to her as gently as she could her approaching departure. She knew that the old lady would feel the loss of her very keenly, and she was afraid of her hearing that she

was going from other lips than her own. Whilst she was at Towan, Gerans told her that her brother had cut his hands badly, and was washing them at the Deer's Well. Then, anxious to know the extent of his hurt, she ran to find him, and arrived at the moment when he had clasped Rose to his heart and was kissing her.

It was some time before she could sufficiently recover herself to walk home, and then a numbness was on her brain, and a chill at her heart, such as no trouble had brought heretofore.

When Rose was alone in her room, she threw herself in a chair by her bed, laid her hands folded on the bed and her face on her hands, and wept long and convulsively. She hardly knew what had happened, her brain was in a whirl. But after an hour, when the storm of her grief and shame had spent itself, she was able to recollect all that had passed. She poured water into her basin, and washed her cheeks and lips, and rubbed them with the towel till they smarted, to wipe away the taint of Dennis's kisses. What must he think of her, to dare thus to touch her? What a low, vile opinion he must have formed of her! Her anger boiled up. She—a married woman—to be thus insulted! The sense of humiliation burnt like fire in her heart, and called forth a new and scalding rain. Gladly would she have sacrificed all her jewelry—her pretty coral necklet, her Roman pearl earrings, if only thereby she could undo what had been done. Never before had she been treated with such indignity, and she hated the man who had offended her. Should she tell Gerans? He would be obliged to revenge the wrong done her. She would do so. She would get the Squire to turn Dennis out of the cottage as well as Loveday. Then she thought that it was no wonder she was shown disrespect when she received scant courtesy from her own husband. Whose fault was it that she had met with this outrage? Whose but Gerans's, who had shown Dennis and everyone that he would not fight her battles? Whose but Gerans's, who allowed it to be seen by all that he had no love for his wife? Whose but Gerans's, who was always deserting her to run down to Nantsillan courting the society of his old flame, Loveday?

Then the current of her indignation turned against the latter, for having witnessed her humiliation. If only the

insolence of Dennis had been offered with no eye-witness to tell tales, it would have mattered less; but that there should have been a witness!—and that witness, Loveday! A fresh flood of tears ran over her burning cheeks.

Would she tell Gerans of the insolence of Dennis? No—she would not. He had not the manhood in him to protect her; why—in such a matter as the riding of Phœbus, he had deserted her, and left her vindication to Dennis. Dennis at least had courage; and if he loved her, was proud to champion her. Dennis Penhalligan had acted towards her very wrongly, but then—he loved her so intensely! As for Gerans, he did not love her at all. Dennis had forgotten himself, and he would regret it. Those regrets should be his punishment. He would be ashamed to meet her again. How he admired, worshipped, loved her! She thought of the night of the Goose Fair, and of the declaration of his despair in the snow! His life had indeed been broken by the loss of her. As for Gerans, he took everything easily. Nothing disconcerted him for long.

When Rose descended to the hall and to the parlour, she seated herself in the shade. She had not the courage to meet the eyes of her mother-in-law or of her husband. She thought they must certainly read in her face what had happened. Her cheeks burnt, and her eyes were cast down, and she was very silent. But neither Mrs. Gaverock nor Gerans observed her condition; and presently she reasoned with herself that she had no occasion for being ashamed, and sitting like a penitent; she had not encouraged Dennis to kiss her. When he put his arm round her, she had bidden him let go, and had striven to thrust him off. Why should she feel compunction because a man no way related to her had misconducted himself?

'Rose!' said Mrs. Gaverock; and at the call Rose started from the study into which she had fallen. 'Rose! are you aware that this is Gerans's twenty-third birthday?'

'It had escaped me,' answered Rose.

'Then—you have not wished him well?'

'I wish you,' said Rose, turning to her husband, 'many happy returns of the day.' She spoke without warmth.

'Was that spoken in earnest or in sarcasm?' asked

Gerans, fixing his eyes on her face entreatingly, but doubtfully.

'Take it which way you like,' she answered with a shrug of her shoulders, stood up, and left the room.

CHAPTER XXXII.

ANTHONY'S WOOING.

Loveday returned to Nantsillan, hardly able to think, so stupefied was she by what she had seen. But she pressed her hands to her bosom, and repeated to herself, 'I am glad I am going!'

She had loved her brother so dearly, believed in him so stoutly, encouraged him so bravely, brightened his cloudy moods with so sanguine a trust in Providence, that what had occurred shook her soul to its depths. How could she hope any more that Heaven would smile upon her brother's efforts, and grant a turn for the better in his prospects, when he harboured a passion that was sinful? She had not believed him to be bad; she had trusted in his integrity. Now that trust was shaken down. She was as despondent as Dennis, for the grounds of her confidence and hope were destroyed.

She saw little of him that evening and next day. He treated her with coldness, and held her at a distance. She would like to speak to him of what lay in her heart, but he allowed her no opportunity. He kept away from the house, as fearing she might speak; and she, in her mind, was doubtful whether a word from her would avail, whether it might not aggravate him to speak cruel words to her which would mortally wound her loving soul.

She had much to occupy her, and this was as well; it took off her thoughts from what had happened. She had to pack her clothes, and instruct little Ruth what to do for her master, and to find a woman who could come in by day and char. Dennis left the whole arrangement and provision with her. He acted as though the house could go on as well without her as with her presence.

In the morning of the day following—that is, on Tuesday—Squire Gaverock looked in.

'Good morning, Loveday,' he said. 'I hear you are going on Wednesday by the coach from Wadebridge. That is right. When you've a mind to do a thing, do it at once, as the cormorant said when he swallowed a herring whole. Gerans shall drive you over to meet the coach. I reckon your brother's gig won't hold your box, and he will be wanted to-morrow. I hear that Reuben Rouse is very ill with inflammation, and Penhalligan can't be spared a whole day to take you into Wadebridge.'

'Thank you, Mr. Gaverock. I shall be much obliged.'

'Golly! don't thank me. I pack you off, and so must see you despatched. I've come about that, and'—he shuffled his feet—'I suppose you ain't too proud to accept a present from me. Mind you, it implies no recognition. I must have time to digest what has been told me, and make up my mind about it. A present commits me to nothing, you understand.' He crushed a couple of five-pound notes into her hand, then hastily went on, to interrupt her as she began to speak: 'Gerans had a near shave of having every bone in his body broken yesterday. I heard all about it from Anthony. Your brother was nigh pulled over the cliffs as well, for he clung on till Anthony was able to lay hold. Well! a man's life on this coast, what with winds and waves and rocks, is full of venture. But that makes life the more enjoyable.' Then suddenly, without giving Loveday time to speak, he strode out of the door, and climbed the steep path through the glen to Towan moor.

The old Squire had spoken with more gentleness than was usual for him, and there had been a kindly look in his rough face. He was thought to be a close and hard man about money. For him to give her ten pounds proved that she had made some way into his regard. To part with it must have cost him a struggle.

Squire Gaverock had not been gone long before the farmer's wife who supplied the Penhalligans with butter and milk appeared. She was a rosy-faced, dark-haired, stout woman named Josse—Jemima Josse.

'Loramussy, Miss Loveday,' exclaimed she, coming in, 'what be this us ha' heared? You're a going to leave us! Loramussy, who ever'd ha' believed it!'

'Yes, Mrs. Josse,' said Loveday. 'I am going away for a while, but only for a while.'

'Folks do talk,' observed Mrs. Josse. 'There be no more stopping 'em than there be a-stopping the waves from roaring and the sand from shifting. Uncle Zackey were up to our place about an hour ago, and says he, "Sure Miss Loveday be agoing all along of your bill for eggs and butter and the side o' bacon you had back along to Cursemass." "No, never!" says I, but I thought I'd just run down and see. If 't be, and it'll keep you, Miss, we'll halve the bacon, and let the eggs and the milk stand over to better times.'

'No, Mrs. Josse; I assure you it is not that. I have the money all ready for you.'

'Well now, I be glad o' that,' said the woman. 'How folks can have the face to talk! I've got my little bill in my pocket, made up to the end o' the month; that's the half year, tacked on to the Cursemass account. If you'd not mind settling all to once, as you can. But if you can't, well, I'll say naught about it. It shall stand over. Still, if once you do get to a great town, there's no knowing what attractions the beautiful things in the shop winders may have on you, and you'll be spending the money.'

'I will pay you in full, Mrs. Josse.'

'And,' said Jemima, 'I've made so bold, Miss, as to bring you down a pound o' cream, real Cornish cream, wi' a round o' brown bread at top to keep it sweet, and make it travel beautiful. Us have heard you're going to Exeter, and my old man and me, us have heard that they Devonshire folk do go and brag as they can make cream, and calls it Devonshire cream. . How folks can be so wicked and set up to be Christians, beats me. But the world is going to destruction. It's all prophesied. You'll accept the pound o' Cornish cream, will you not, Miss, and let some of the folks in Devon look at it, and taste it, and may they never make so bould as to call theer own rubbish cream again.'

When Jemima Josse was gone, an old woman, bent with rheumatism, arrived, leaning on a stick.

'Well, Mary Tregothnan,' said Loveday. 'Come to see me before I leave?'

'O Lord! Miss, whatever shall us do without y'?' asked old Mary. 'There be that three yards o' red flannel

you was so very good as to give me last winter. I rolled 'n round my body and sewed it on, and her do give me a power of comfort. Whenever I goes to church, and whenever I sez my prayers, I be wearing thicky (that) flannel, and the Lord sees it, and I show 'n how good Miss Loveday were to a poor body with rheumaticks in her bones. But, Miss, I 'sure you I've never had thicky bit o' flannel off to this day, and never will till her drops off.'

'Oh, Mary, surely——'

'My dear young leddy, if you knew the comfort her be to my back! But I reckon you're agoing away, and mebbe won't be here next winter. I'm that bould, Miss, to bring you a bottle of ketchup I made last fall. Her's cruel good, and her'll keep a terrible long time.'

'Oh, thank you, thank you so much, Mary!'

'My dear! if the flannel should goo all into holes about me, afore you come back, it will be a pity. I reckon you'll be too far away to think on me next winter when it be cold and I be took wi' the pains in my back, and the flannel be wore as thin as muslin. But, sure, whenever you taste the ketchup you'll mind old Mary Tregothnan and her bad back.'

The next to come was little Ruth.

'Please, Miss,' said the small maid, holding a pair of large mottled blue, green, and black gull's eggs, 'my brother Jim have been scrambling about the cliffs. He thought you'd like to have some gull's eggs to show to the foreigners inland in Devonshire. I reckon they've never seen a gull's egg. But this be a wrong time for getting them good, as all the little 'uns be hatched out, so he were forced to get two as was addled. If you'll shake them, Miss, you'll hear how the trade swashes about inside. Jim sed they'd better not be blowed—they wouldn't travel so well. But when you're settled, Miss, please to make a hole at both ends, and put your mouth to one, and blow as hard as ever you can, and all the inerds will come out fast enough. And Jim sed as how you was to be very kearful wi' them and fold them up in your best silk gown, in the middle of the box, for if they wos to break—there'd be a smeech (smell)!'

'Oh, thank you, Ruth, and thank Jim so much for me!'

'And, please, Miss, Jim sed I wos to tell you that if you heard of a sitivation with a nobleman as game-keeper, he'd take it very kind if you'd put in a word for him.'

The next to come was the captain of a slate quarry in the parish, with a pot of honey in one hand, and a slab of slate under the other arm.

'Why, Miss Penhalligan!' said Captain Davie, 'this is a disaster indeed, that us is to lose you. I don't believe as there be nobody in the parish will be missed more than you. Not that folks sees so much of you. You've your duties at home, but when you do visit 'em, they vallies your visits as those of angels. As for my wife, her be that took on, her have so thought about your going that it have gived her the collick, and her can't come up and see yourself as her'd have liked. So I've a-come instead. I do assure you, Miss, us have cried in the night thinking you was going.' He began to sniff and wipe his eyes and nose. 'And now I've made that daring bold to bring you up a little present of a pot of honey. It come from a virgin swarm, took last fall, and beautiful and clear now as when it was runned out of the comb. Lord! sure I've shooked the pot in coming, and the cover be a bit busted, and the honey be running down the side. But, Miss, the pot will travel well enough if you put it at the bottom of your box under the clothes, and write on the cover of your box, in big letters, "This side uppermost."'

'How good, how kind you are!' exclaimed Loveday, with the tears in her eyes also.

'And, Miss,' continued the captain, producing the great slate and placing that also on the table, 'if I might be so bold as to ask a favour, would you mind taking this here sample of our slate with you, and if when your' about travelling you hear any talk of slate, would you kindly show this sample, and ring it, and let folks see the colour, and recommend my quarry.'

So Loveday was left with a pot of cream in dog days, sure to become sour; a medicine bottle of ketchup, stopped with an old castor-oil cork that did not fit, and was so oily that it would not keep in; two addled gull's eggs, a pot of honey running over the side, and a slab of slate, to add to the rest of her property; and she was too sensible of the

kindness shown her, and too conscientious, to leave any of these articles behind.

The affection and generosity of the good people touched her. She saw nothing of the selfishness that spiced their kindness: she saw the kindness alone. That the Squire had given her ten pounds to help to be rid of her, and that the farmer's wife had come down to get her money if she could, and that Mary wanted another three yards of flannel, and Jim a good situation, and Captain Davie an extension of custom, through her, was either unnoticed by her, or was not regarded as in any way derogating from the kindness of the people in making their presents.

But these were not the only visitors Loveday had, interrupting her at her packing.

Whilst she was engaged, in the afternoon, in securing the honey with a cover of oiled paper, she was called away by the arrival of Madam Loveys and Anthony, her son.

'Why!' exclaimed the lady, looking round her, and taking observations of everything in the room, 'what is the meaning of this, Miss Penhalligan! Going to leave us! The news only reached me this morning. Cook told me when I was ordering dinner. I prevented Anthony going out boating this afternoon, and have made him put on his best clothes, and have brought him over.'

What Anthony had to do with this was not clear.

'Why are you going?' asked Madam. 'No one goes away without a reason. What is your reason?'

'There are several reasons,' said Loveday. 'One is that I want to relieve my brother from a little expense, and I intend to earn some money if I may with my services.'

'Any situation in view?'

'No, Mrs. Loveys, none.'

'Umph!'

Then from young Anthony, 'Go out, Toby! Get out, you rascal!' addressed to a terrier who had come in and was jumping about him.

'The dog will do no harm here,' said Loveday. 'Let me get him a bit of biscuit.'

'No, please,' said Madam. 'We have rules. The dogs are not fed in the house, and the dog ought not to come in. Turn out Toby, Anthony.'

Then ensued a series of efforts on the part of Anthony to get the dog out. Toby went under the table, and would not leave, though his master adjured him. At last young Anthony slipped out at the door, and kneeling down began to scratch with his fingers on the step. Toby, thinking the noise proceeded from rats, went out to ascertain. But directly he saw his master, he darted back into the hall again.

'Never mind the dog,' said Loveday.

'But I do mind, Miss Penhalligan,' said Madam. 'Rules are rules. If it were not that this floor is slated, Toby would not have dared to intrude. How are you going?'

'The Squire has very kindly offered to have me driven to Wadebridge, where I shall take the coach to Bodmin, and from Bodmin, by Launceston, I shall go by coach to Exeter.

'Umph?'

'I hope Mr. Loveys is well.'

'Oh, nothing ever ails him but gout. I think, Anthony, if Miss Penhalligan will allow you to seduce Toby into the kitchen, you might shut him in there, and run round, and in again by the front of the house.'

This manœuvre was executed, but with only partial success. The dog was, indeed, beguiled into the kitchen, but he created such terror in Ruth, by jumping up on her and snapping at her nose and the flaps of her white cap, that Mrs. Loveys was obliged to open the door and call Toby back into the hall. He at once returned, and began smelling round the room for rats.

'Where are you going to in Exeter?' asked Madam, reseating herself.

'I am going to my cousin till I hear of something.'

'How long will that be?'

Loveday could not tell.

'Have you had this idea long in your head? Really, Anthony, that Toby is unendurable. What is he about now?'

'There are rats there, I reckon,' said Anthony. The terrier was on one side scratching furiously in the corner, uttering sharp barks.

'I think he smells the cake in my cupboard,' said Loveday, rising: 'he shall be given a bit.'

'Upon my word, Anthony, I will not bring you out with me again if you cannot keep Toby in order.' Mrs. Loveys stood up hastily and arrested Loveday. 'No, Miss Penhalligan, not in the room. Toby! Toby! Give me the piece of saffron cake, Miss Penhalligan. I will decoy the dog out of the house, and keep him there awhile, and leave Anthony.'

Then Madam Loveys walked in a stately manner out of the door, holding up a piece of yellow plumcake, whilst Toby danced, and jumped, and barked round her, and tumbled over, picked himself up, and jumped again.

Loveday reseated herself.

'Toby is but a pup,' said Anthony.

Then ensued a silence. Loveday looked to the door, expecting the return of Mrs. Loveys.

'Mamma is walking about with Toby,' explained Anthony. 'She won't be in for some minutes.'

Another silence ensued.

'Are you fond of dogs?' asked young Loveys.

'I never had one to care for,' answered the young lady. 'Would you like a piece of cake? Very plain.'

'Thank you,' answered Anthony, 'I can always eat cake.'

'Perhaps you would like a little cream on top of it,' said Loveday. 'Mrs. Josse has been so very kind as to send me a pot, but I really do not think it will keep till I reach Exeter. Let me find you a spoon and a plate.'

'Thank you,' answered Anthony. 'Plum cake is terrible good with cream.'

Then ensued another pause, of long duration, during which young Loveys heaped the clotted cream on his cake as thickly as it would stand, and conveyed it to his mouth, not, however, without dropping some on the floor, which he covered with his foot.

'I hope you find it good,' said Loveday.

'Terrible,' answered Anthony, and helped himself to more.

Then Madam Loveys was visible, passing the window and looking in. Also Toby came to the door, stood on the threshold, looked at Anthony and at Loveday, shook his ears, and went back to Madam. At the sight of the dog

young Loveys concealed the cake and cream, lest Toby should exact a share.

'Toby! how are they getting on?' asked Madame Loveys without, quite audibly to those within.

Young Anthony grew red, pushed the cream from him, and said, 'Don't you eat any!'

'Not now, thank you,' answered Loveday.

A long pause. Anthony coughed, and crossed his feet. Then coughed again, disunited his feet, and recrossed them, the foot below on the former occasion being placed uppermost on this.

Mrs. Loveys again swept past the door and window. Anthony, as though stimulated by the sight of his mother to say something, remarked, 'Toby's tail is cut too short to be beautiful, I think, and his ears ain't cut at all. They don't congrue.'

'I don't see why dogs' tails should be cut,' said Loveday.

'Oh, of course, they must be cut.'

'Why?'

'Because, you see, they always are cut.'

'Always?'

'Depends, of course, on the sort of dog.'

Madam Loveys now stood in the doorway; she said, 'Well Anthony?' in a tone of query.

'Well, mother,' answered the young man in a tone of assurance.

Then Madam Loveys resumed her walk.

'Will not Mrs. Loveys come in and sit down?' asked Loveday.

'Oh, no, not yet, till we've settled about it.'

'Settled about what?' inquired the young lady somewhat puzzled.

'Oh, you know. All that sort of thing. You know.'

A pause. Then Anthony got up, went to the door, and called his mother. She appeared at once with Toby. The dog dashed in, became at once aware that some eating had been going on, span about the floor after crumbs, lapped up the spilt cream, and insisted on more, jumping about the table, and sniffing and yelping.

'All right, mother,' said Anthony. 'She understands.'

'Glad to hear it. So he has asked you?' said Mrs. Loveys, addressing Loveday.

'I beg your pardon,' said the latter, colouring. 'Mr. Anthony has asked me nothing. I asked him why dogs' tails were cut, and have not yet had a satisfactory answer.'

'There, Anthony, you never can be trusted. Sit down, Miss Penhalligan.' Loveday had risen when Mrs. Loveys entered. 'I must speak for him. Anthony will have plenty to live on, but he must have a wife with a head on her shoulders, and I have fixed on you. You are so excellent, and so kind and generally beloved, so prudent and sensible, that I think you will do very well for Anthony; his father and I have the greatest pleasure in saying so.'

Loveday was too astonished to speak.

'Anthony is not a bad fellow. He is dough to be moulded. A woman with wits will make something out of him.'

'My dear Mrs. Loveys,' said Loveday, greatly moved, 'this is kind and flattering of you. I had not an idea. It is so unexpected. I had not the remotest——'

'There is no immediate hurry,' said Madam. 'Turn the proposal over. Good heavens! Piff! piff!'

Toby had leaped on the table to get at the cream and cake, and had upset the gull's eggs on the slate floor. An immediate retreat into the open air was necessary.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

FAREWELL.

The last to emerge from the cottage was Anthony, who said, with a sense of pride, 'I have put the cream out of the reach of the dog. Toby is very fond of cream.'

'My dear Miss Penhalligan,' said Mrs. Loveys, standing on the doorstep, 'we are quite of one mind in this. Nothing could be better for Anthony. Though he is my son, I say it, he is a good boy. There is no vice in him, and his constitution is sound. He has had measles, chicken-pox, whooping-cough, and ringworm, and got through and out of all bravely. He has been vaccinated, and it took beautifully. What more could you desire? We do not wish to hasten you to a decision, but desire that you will bear our proposal in mind, mark and inwardly digest it.'

'Mrs. Loveys, Mr. Anthony!' said Loveday, looking from one to the other; 'you must not think me ungrateful for the great honour and kindness you have shown me, but——'

'There can be no buts in the case,' said Mrs. Loveys; 'it commends itself to my mind as admirable, and Mr. Loveys quite agrees with me. As Anthony is so flexible, it is most important that he should be put in the hands of a woman with a character and will of her own. He has, or will have, quite sufficient means. After his father's death he will be well off. We have put our heads together, and weighed a good many girls one against another, and we have decided on you for our daughter-in-law.'

'I cannot—I cannot, indeed,' protested Loveday, tearfully. 'You are very good. I shall never forget your goodness, but—it cannot, indeed, be.'

'Hoity toity!' exclaimed Madam. 'No can'ts and shan'ts with me. What I have settled shall be. I was a Gaverock, and though I have changed my name by marrying Loveys, still, bone and muscle and fat and flesh, I am Gaverock still. Come, Anthony! Come, Toby! Pah! I have the smell of those addled eggs in my nose still.'

'My dear Mrs. Loveys——'

'My dear Miss Penhalligan, leave everything to me. I am a manager. There—we will say no more about this matter at present. Let it stand to settle. It will do Anthony good to have the cloud hang over him, ready to fall when we summon it to descend. Stay, my dear; I saw an advertisement in the "Light of the West" that may suit you. I will send it to Towan to-night, and you shall have it in the morning. One of the Towan maidens is at our house, and she will carry it back.'

'Oh, Mrs. Loveys, dear kind Mrs. Loveys! I cannot express to you all—do not think me unfeeling, ungrateful. I will write to you from Exeter.'

'Very well, do so. Let us hear of your safe arrival and prospects. I will put a pencil mark against the advertisement. It may or it may not suit you. It may be already filled, or it may be still vacant. Come along, Anthony! come along, Toby! Anthony, you awkward fellow, are you going away without saying good-bye to Miss Penhalligan, whom you may not see for many months? Good-bye, Miss

Loveday; you have my best wishes, and—oh! I must not forget—here is a little brooch I have brought you, rather pretty, of spiral gold work, with an enamel view of the Staubach in the middle—a scene in the Alps. You will keep it as a remembrancer of me; and when you look at that you will think of my proposal for Anthony. Now then, Toby! Come along, Anthony!'

When the Loveys' party was gone, Loveday sat for a few minutes in the unfurnished parlour, while little Ruth wiped up the mess made by the broken eggs.

Poor Ruth was sore distressed at their 'going scatt' on the floor; and Loveday was obliged to simulate great disappointment as well, and to beg that she might be given two more gulls' eggs next spring, when they would be fresh, not addled.

Loveday was obliged to sit quiet for awhile to review the proposal made to her. She could not accept it.

It was very kind of Mrs. Loveys, she thought; she had not conceived the smallest ambition in that direction. Were she to become Mrs. Anthony, she would be in a position of considerable social advantage—she would have an excellent home and handsome fortune to dispose of; that it would assist her brother greatly she was also aware, but, notwithstanding all the advantages, it was a proposal she could not entertain. She shook her head. No, it was as she had told Mrs. Loveys, a thing that could not be. She resolved not to say anything about it to Dennis; indeed, not to any one. If the Loveys liked to speak about it, they might; but she resolved to write from Exeter to tell Mrs. Loveys that she refused the offer definitely. It would be easier to write than to speak her refusal. It would be more likely to be taken as final when written.

Loveday again thought of the kindness of all who had come to see her that day, and again forgot that every one of her visitors had come, not only to give, but also to take.

She could not allow herself much time for her thoughts. She had too much to do. She had promised Mrs. Gaverock to run up in the afternoon and say good-bye to her. The afternoon was wearing on. She put on her bonnet and took her way to Towan. She must also part with Rose, and she doubted how to do so after yesterday. In her

sweet, innocent heart, she could not believe that Rose had given Dennis any encouragement; she was sure that the kisses had been taken by violence. She felt that Rose must be full of indignation against Dennis, and she herself felt that, as the sister of the man who had offered the insult, some of the anger of the injured woman must overflow upon her. Knowing what she did, having seen the insult offered, and knowing also that Rose knew her to have witnessed it, the meeting between them must be awkward, and their conduct towards each other restrained; indeed, Loveday told herself that she would not venture to look up and meet Rose's eye. That incident of yesterday had covered Loveday with humiliation and stained her brow with shame.

The parting of Mrs. Gaverock with Loveday was tender; the old lady had, however, the great consolation of hope that on Loveday's return it would be as her acknowledged daughter-in-law. She had not much confidence in her own influence with Hender Gaverock, but she could do something. She saw, moreover, that the old Squire was becoming daily more irritated against Rose, who was insubordinate, and who was unwilling or incapable of taking the management of 'the maidens,' whose turbulence, thoughtlessness, and neglect were as vexatious to the old man now that Rose was at the head of the house as when she was away on her honeymoon. Rose had the key of the store-room, but forgot to give out supplies, and went for a ride on Phœbus with the key in her pocket. The Squire discovered that 'the maidens' were gravitating one and all to the stables, to laugh and romp with the groom and coachman, and that, accordingly, the men did their work imperfectly. The bread was underbaked, the potatoes were boiled without salt, the beds were made with a strip of blanket to tease the feet when thrust to the bottom, the coal-cellar was left unlocked, and tracks of dropped fragments indicated the road to all the neighbouring cottages except Nantsillan. Now and then old Gaverock, with exhausted patience, rushed in among 'the maidens' and gave them all notice to quit, scaring and scattering them, squalling and chattering, as a paper kite sent up over a rookery scares and scatters the clamorous rooks. But no improvement was effected by his interference; either the

same maidens came back on their own terms, or raw, ignorant hands were imported, who smashed the crockery, stood on one foot with their hands in their pockets when addressed by their mistress, and sent in the plates and tumblers smeared and thumbed. Occasionally, before her marriage, Rose had interfered, and had spasmodically made herself useful; but she did nothing well for long, she tired rapidly of self-imposed tasks, and when the tasks became duties she was reluctant to acknowledge them as such. Mrs. Gaverock foresaw that, before the twelvemonth was out, the Squire would send for Loveday, acknowledge her as a Gaverock, and make her his housekeeper. She was so confident of this that she smiled through her tears as she bade Loveday good-bye, and threw her gold chain round her neck, and bade her keep her pretty gold watch as a remembrance of Towan.

Rose was not in the parlour with her mother-in-law, but as Loveday left she saw her in the hall. With downcast eyes the latter approached Rose, and said, 'Good-bye, I am off to-morrow, and shall not see you again for a twelvemonth.'

'I am sure you will have a very pleasant drive to Wadebridge to-morrow,' said Rose, with sarcasm in her tone. She had been told that Gerans was to take Loveday to the coach. Loveday raised her timid eyes with surprise, and dropped them again.

'I hope you will have a satisfactory absence,' said Rose, holding out her hand, and touching that of Loveday with the tips of her fingers. 'You have my best wishes.' With a cold, distant bow she left the room.

Miss Penhalligan, hurt, though she had not expected cordiality, walked back to Nantsillan more sad at heart than she had been before that day. She found Dennis returned. He asked where she had been, and she told him she had said farewell to Mrs. Gaverock and Rose at Towan. He said nothing more than that he was going out again to see Reuben Rouse.

When Loveday had left, Rose composed her face and went into the parlour to her mother-in-law.

'My dear,' said Mrs. Gaverock, 'I hear a noise from the kitchen; it penetrates even here, though there is a six-foot stone wall between. The sound is that of the maidens

talking together. I suspect they are all chattering, whereas Mary ought to be ironing in the laundry, and Anne milking in the cowhouse, and Susan drawing down the blinds upstairs, and Betty getting the tea-things ready, and Priscilla washing up in the back kitchen, and Genefer preparing the pie for supper or peeling the potatoes. Would you kindly look into the kitchen. Hark! I hear men's voices. I think that possibly the gardener, and the coachman, and the stable-boy, and one or two of the labourers may be there as well.'

Rose went out, and for a minute there was a lull in the buzz of voices that made its way even through a six-foot wall. Directly Rose left the kitchen it recommenced louder than ever.

'Yes,' said she, returning to Mrs. Gaverock, 'the men were there, drinking cyder and eating hunches of currant cake. They had come for their milk, they said. It is my belief that they are given fresh milk instead of scalded.'

'Very likely,' said Mrs. Gaverock. 'I wish, Rose, you would look after matters a little more. I cannot; I did it when I was able. I would do it now, if I could.'

'I was not brought up to it,' answered Rose; 'my father had a housekeeper, and I am ignorant of the smallest matters of housekeeping.'

'That is unfortunate; someone must take the management of an establishment such as this.'

'Besides,' said Rose, 'I don't like it.'

'We cannot always do what we like. We have duties to perform, as well as pleasures to distract us.'

'I do not see it. We are rich enough to have a woman here who can look after the maids and serve out stores.'

'My dear,' said Mrs. Gaverock, confidentially, 'I am in hopes of getting our Loveday here eventually, in the house, and then she shall have the keys and the control of everything. That is my scheme.

Rose flushed angrily.

'Indeed! Set her over me; take from me my proper authority! Let her plant her feet on my neck!'

'My dear,' exclaimed Mrs. Gaverock, 'I do not understand you. Just now you said that you wanted a person here to relieve you of irksome obligations.'

'A hired servant, yes. I won't have Loveday in the house ; if she comes, I shall leave it.'

Mrs. Gaverock looked at her out of her faded eyes with astonishment.

'You are incomprehensible to me, Rose ; there is not a more suitable person than Loveday. I thought you were devoted to her.'

'I do not want to have her installed here in a position of authority over me.'

'She would not be in authority.'

'Yes, she would. If I wanted squab pie some day, she would answer, "Can't have it, I have ordered neck of mutton." I do not like neck. I never did like it. Besides, there are other reasons.'

'What ?'

Rose was silent.

'Come here, and sit by me on the sofa,' said Mrs. Gaverock. 'You are one of the family. There is no reason why you should be kept in the dark any longer. You shall be told all.'

Then Mrs. Gaverock confided to Rose the story of Constantine's secret marriage to Loveday.

'My husband,' she went on, 'knew nothing about it till last Sunday, and then he was very angry. He has ordered Loveday to go away, whilst he makes up his mind whether to recognise her as a Gaverock or not.'

Rose hung her head, and covered her face with both her hands. She was ashamed of her jealousy. Now she understood why Gerans had made so much of Loveday; why Loveday deserved much attention. Now she comprehended the force of Loveday's words that evening that she had been with her at Nantsillan when she had said, 'Gerans is nothing, can be nothing more to me, than a kind and trusted brother.'

Loveday was her sister-in-law, a cruelly injured sister-in-law, denied recognition by the old tyrant Squire, when she had a right to exact it. She had been unfairly treated by Constantine. Why had not Gerans stood up for her ? Rose answered herself indignantly, 'Because he is a coward, he feared his father.' Then in her impetuosity, acting on the sudden revulsion in her feelings, inconsiderate in this, as in all things, conscious only that she had not parted

from Loveday with the affection that was her due, regardless whether it were well for her, after the event of yesterday, to go to the house of Dennis Penhalligan, she threw on her bonnet and shawl, and ran down to Nantsillan, sprung into the hall, and cast her arms round Loveday, crying and laughing and kissing her and calling her by every available endearing term.

'Oh, Loveday, dear Loveday, you must forgive me if I was cold to you just now. The—the servants were bothering me. I wish you would come and take the management out of my hands.'

She was ashamed to admit her jealousy, so she gave a false excuse.

'I thought, I thought,' said Loveday, timidly, speaking in a tremulous, low tone, 'that you were angry with me because——' she hesitated, caught her breath, as her heart fluttered, 'because of what my brother did, because he so forgot himself yesterday. Oh, dear Rose, do forgive him! If you love me at all, do forgive and forget this offence.'

'I took the rags to the well because my husband told me to do so,' explained Rose. 'He said that Mr. Penhalligan had torn his hands badly, and that they were bleeding.'

'Forgive him this once, Rose,' pleaded Loveday earnestly. 'Tell no one of his impertinence, and he will, I trust, never forget himself again. It is, I dare say, hard for you to pardon him. I can understand your indignation, but great excuse is to be made for Dennis. I may tell you now, though my mouth was sealed before, that he loved you, very, very much. I think he cared more for you than for any person or anything the world contains. My brother has a very strong nature, and he feels very strongly. He has had to put great control on himself; and then, when he was excited, and fevered, just recovered from the brink of destruction, thrilled in every nerve, and fired with the pain of his wounds, you will allow there is some little excuse to be made for him. I am sure—I am sure Dennis will never so far forget himself as to commit such an indiscretion again. You will—you will forgive?'

'Very well, Loveday,' answered Rose, with great magnanimity, 'as *you* ask it I will pass this affront over. I can refuse you nothing. Otherwise——' She did not

finish her sentence, but assumed an indignant and injured look.

Dennis Penhalligan saw Rose leave the cottage. She did not see him. He watched her, and he thought, 'I have not offended her. Had my conduct yesterday been regarded as an unpardonable affront, she would not have come to my cottage in the evening. Why should she come? She had already said farewell to Loveday. She comes to show me that I am forgiven.'

CHAPTER XXXIV.

'P. F.'

Gerans drove Loveday to Wadebridge next day, and saw her and her box safe into and on the coach. Loveday was silent and tearful when she started. She was leaving home, a small home and a humble one—still it was home. This was the second time her home had been broken up. The first time was on the death of her mother, this was on the death of her confidence and belief in her brother. Dennis had turned on her, who had loved him with such tender devotion, and had spurned her from him. Nantsillan could never be to her a home again; when she returned, perhaps she would be recognised by Squire Gaverock as a connection, perhaps not. Either way it mattered little to her; Nantsillan could not be home, because the mutual love and trust which make a home had gone, and would never return the same. Gerans did not attempt to comfort her, he allowed her to cry her heart's first sorrow away; he was kind and pitiful. Only when he thought her grief was abating did he speak, and bid her hope for the best, and always rely on this, that at Towan there were those who loved her and who would love to hear tidings of her, to whom good news of her would bring the best of pleasure and bad news would afford acutest sorrow. 'Whatever my father may decide, Loveday,' he said, in a kind tone, 'remember that I am your brother. Whether he acknowledge you or not, I am honoured and proud to look to you as bound to me by kinship.' Then in a sad voice, full of humility, 'I'm but a

poor sort of a fellow, and am thankful to have one to hold by whom all can respect.'

Loveday looked at him, touched by his kindness, but surprised at the diffident tone. Gerans, strong, hale, handsome; a young squire, with a beautiful young wife. What right had he to speak doubtfully of himself? She was unable to see into his heart. His confidence in himself was rudely shaken. His wife did not love him.. The reason was to be sought in himself, and he was conscious now, for the first time, of his own shortcomings.

Strangely, as he became aware that Rose did not care for him, his love for her became more articulate. It had been inchoate. He had liked her greatly, was attached to her in a dreamy, indistinct way, till he discovered that she had no love for him, then, but not till then, did his love become distinct, ardent—a passion. Loveday saw that his open, pleasant face was clouded, and then it struck her that this arose from more than distress at her departure. She was far too humble-minded to imagine that the loss of such an insignificant person as herself could disturb the bright sky of the young Squire of Towan.

'I hope, Gerans, you have had nothing to vex you,' she asked with some tremor, for she thought it just possible Rose might have spoken to him of the behaviour of Dennis.

He sighed. 'I have nothing very special,' he said. He was so upright, so transparently truthful, that he could not endure to say what was not strictly true, so he corrected himself. 'I should not have said that. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger intermeddleth not with its joy,"' he said.

'I am not a stranger,' said Loveday, gently; 'and the text speaks of the stranger not intermeddling with joy. The full heart is better if it can overflow into that of a friend—a sister. You have said I am a sister.' He shook his head, and whipped the horse.

'You, dear Loveday, do not know what a tumble down it is to one who thought himself great things to find he is a poor fool. The cock has crowed on the dunghill very loud till the day that the nightingale sang, and then he discovered he was only a dunghill fowl, and hid his head.'

'What hand has made you fall? What voice has sung and made you droop your wings?'

He did not answer her, but looked straight away to the horizon.

After a while, she saw him put up his whip hand to his eyes, and draw the back across them.

'Gerans,' she said gently, in her soft entreating tones, 'tell your sister what is the trouble in your heart.'

'Loveday, you know Rose better than anyone else.'

'I think so. A girl understands a girl, and a man understands a man.'

'Yes,' he said. 'I do not think Rose loves me. That is, truly spoken, I know she does not. You see, she was but a child when I asked her to be mine, and even now she is but a little over nineteen. We waited over her nineteenth birthday to be married. What is a boy of eighteen or nineteen? He is only a boy, wayward, unstable, not knowing his own mind. A girl is the same. I dare say Rose thought there was more in me than there is. I never came up to Constantine in parts. He was in compound subtraction before I got out of low division.'

'I am sure you are mistaken,' said Loveday, gravely.

'No, I am not,' answered Gerans; 'in these matters the heart is very keen sighted.'

'Gerans,' said Loveday; 'do not be cast down without occasion. I know Rose intimately. Yesterday she said good-bye to me with such coldness that I was very unhappy, and an hour after she ran down to Nantsillan, and hugged and kissed me and cried; and she told me she loved me most dearly. Do you know why she was cold before? She told me because she was worried about the servants. She changes her mood, not because she is capricious, but because she can only think of one thing at a time.' He shook his head.

'She has been growing colder and colder towards me.'

'Do not be discouraged. Be kind and attentive to her. Do not reproach her, bear with her. As you say, she is a child. Perhaps she has not yet loved you with ardour—that will come with time, as the seriousness of life impresses itself upon her. She has something of the butterfly in her yet. The ants are given wings for one day to find a home, and when they have found it, they bite off their wings with their own teeth, and settle for life. Rose has but just come

to her home, and her shiny, beautiful, rainbow wings are quivering in the sweet air and pure sunshine; do not be impatient, wait—wait, and she will tear them off with her own hands.'

Gerans' face lightened. It was a pleasure to see the shadow glide away.

'A woman,' continued Loveday, 'is a creeper; she *must* cling to the post to which she is tied, it is her nature to do so.'

Gerans laughed. 'A very wooden post is that to which my blush Rose is bound.'

'One very strong,' said Loveday quickly, smiling also, 'and sound to the core.'

'Here we are at Wadebridge,' said Gerans; 'and now, before I forget it, I have in my pocket a paper which my aunt Loveys sent up to our house to be given to you. She says that she has marked with red ink the passage about which she spoke to you.'

He fumbled in his pocket, and produced the newspaper, and gave it to Loveday, who, without looking at it, put it in her reticule.

'I shall have abundance of time in the coach for looking at the news and reading the advertisements,' she said.

He handed her from the light cart, and helped the ostler to convey her box to the coach, which was already standing in front of the inn, and the horses were being put in.

The box was hauled to the top of the coach, and strapped down. Loveday stepped into the coach. She was the only passenger inside.

'You have not far to go before you change,' said Gerans at the window. 'At Bodmin you get into another coach which will convey you to Launceston, where you sleep the night. You will travel to-morrow to Exeter. Here, Loveday, is a little basket of provisions, a roast chicken and some cold eggs and some cake, my mother sends you, and a little bottle of wine. I am so ashamed, I alone have nothing for you but my best, best wishes, dear sister. God be with you.'

'Your best wishes—I prize nothing higher.' She took his hand, and leaning through the window lightly kissed his cheek.

'God bless you, dear Gerans. Be sure of this—what-

ever clouds and showers you pass through, that true honest heart will lead you at last to great happiness.'

Gerans pressed her hand. 'I accept your words,' he said, 'as the message of an angel.'

Then the driver cracked his whip this way, that way, when round went the wheels—clatter, clatter, went the horses' hoofs on the boulder pavement; a white handkerchief was waved out of the coach window, and Gerans stood, with his hat in his hand, signalling after it.

Then the four horses swung round a corner, and the scarlet-bodied coach lurched after them; and Gerans saw Loveday no more.

The distance from Wadebridge to Bodmin is but seven miles; Loveday sat back and allowed her tears to flow unrestrained because unobserved. Her talk with Gerans had done her good, she had been able to clear away a trouble that oppressed him. She spoke to him in great sincerity; she understood Rose better than Rose understood herself. She could not believe that Rose was untrue to her husband, even in thought, but she quite believed that her heart had not yet been roused to love and value Gerans as he deserved.

She knew well that one cause, if not the chief cause of Rose's dissatisfaction was her husband's submission to his father. Loveday had not spoken on this matter to Gerans, because he had not alluded to it; but if he had done so, she would have counselled him to continue as heretofore. The caprice of a girl must not turn him against the mature determination of an experienced man. Gerans must think for himself, and if, which was most sure, Rose opposed the old Squire out of empty fancy, out of a spirit of perversity, he must not take his wife's side. This would displease her at first, but after a while she would admit that he had acted aright.

Loveday was so confident in the rectitude of Gerans that she did not regret not having given him advice on this point. His own conscience would be his best adviser, other counsel was superfluous.

At Bodmin, Loveday got a seat inside the Launceston and Exeter coach only through the courtesy of a gentleman, who had secured an inside seat, but vacated it for her, and went outside.

The day was so fine, the air so exhilarating, that she had little compunction in accepting his offer, and assurance that he preferred a place on the top.

About an hour after leaving Bodmin, as the scenery was uninteresting, and she desired to turn her thoughts away from Nantsillan and Towan for a while, Loveday opened her reticule, and drew forth the paper sent her by Mrs. Loveys. It was a small badly printed sheet, with a print, rude and blotty, of a lighthouse on the top. Under this woodcut was the title, *The Light of the West*. It was a religious paper for Sunday reading. As Loveday unfolded it, her eye was caught by a score of red ink against an advertisement. She looked at the paragraph indicated, and read as follows :—

'Wanted, immediately, a gentlewoman by birth and education, to be the companion of a young married lady, with a child, an infant, to assist in the management of the house, and the care of the child. Remuneration liberal. Apply P.F., the Post Office, Launceston. A personal interview desired.'

'Why,' said Loveday to herself, 'this is the very thing I desire. Nothing could suit me better. I will not go on to Exeter to-morrow, I will stay a day in Launceston.'

She thought a good deal about this opening. '"P. F.,"' she repeated to herself, 'P must stand for Priscilla, or Prudence, or Philippa, or Phœbe.'

The long road over the dreary Bodmin moors was not interesting ; little presented itself to distract her thoughts from herself and the chance presented to her by the advertisement.

'"P.F.,"' she said. 'I wonder whether I shall come to know and make a friend of "P.F."'

As the coach, in the evening, dashed up to the door of the King's Arms, a gentleman who was walking towards the inn sprang aside from the horses.

The coach drew up at the inn. Then the door was opened, and the gentleman, a tall, grave young man, with very black hair, an aquiline nose, and deep-set dark eyes, courteously came to the coach-door and held out his arm to assist Loveday Penhalligan to descend.

CHAPTER XXXV.

ENGAGED.

When Loveday had settled about a bedroom, and had unpacked what few things she would want for the night, had removed her bonnet and taken off her gloves, and smoothed her glossy, abundant dark hair, she came down into the coffee-room of the King's Arms, and ordered tea and an egg.

The gentleman who had handed her from the coach was there, reading a paper. He was dressed in a long black coat with high velvet collar, and dark knee-breeches with black silk stockings. His hair was black, cut short in front, but falling behind, longer than was usual at the time. Indeed, his dress was antiquated. He was in the costume worn, probably, by his father. His throat was surrounded by a white, fine linen tie, and his waistcoat disclosed beautiful lace ruffles in front.

His manner, like his dress, was old-fashioned and courtly. When he heard Loveday order her frugal repast, he put down the paper he was reading, stood up, bowed, and said :

'Will you excuse the interference, madam, of a gentleman who, though he has not passed through the College of Surgeons, yet exercises some of the functions of a medical man? There are some men, madam, who are born to heal the infirmities of their fellows, who have the instinct, or shall I not say reverently, the inspiration, of healing given to them from on high, without any seeking and study. There are others who acquire laboriously what is intuitive in some. I speak in no spirit of vanity when I say that I am a born physician of the body.'

Loveday looked at him with wonder, marvelling to what this preamble would lead. There was an expression of such goodness, simplicity, and desire to oblige in his striking face, that she felt confidence at once in her strange companion of the coffee-room.

'You have come a long way to-day, madam?'

'Yes, from almost the other end of Cornwall.'

'And you have been journeying the entire day?'

'Yes, sir. I left home early. I have been in two coaches and an open gig.'

'Then,' said he, 'I am confirmed in my audacity in prescribing for you something more substantial than an egg, a bit of toast, and tea. I have ordered a roast fowl for my supper, and a custard pudding. I hope, madam, you will not regard me as taking an undue liberty, being a total stranger, in asking you to share the fowl with me. It would be foul conduct in me to eat the bird, and leave the lady but the egg. Which,' said he, 'is a joke, madam.'

Then he gave directions to the waiter to have two covers laid at the table.

'I believe,' said the gentleman, who was, it need hardly be said, Paul Featherstone, of Marsland, 'that I am the intruder here. The general coffee-room is repugnant to me. There has been smoking in it, and I am averse to the odour of tobacco. I believe that this is, in fact, the private ladies' room, and that I am here only on sufferance, madam. If my presence at all incommodes you, I will withdraw; but I trust to your good nature to endure my society for a little while. We must both eat, and why not eat in society? Social intercourse gives relish to the best food. I am so accustomed to the company of my sister, that a meal without a lady to grace the board would not agree with me.'

Loveday did not answer him, save with a grateful look. He spoke in so kind a tone, and with a manner so fatherly, that she felt quite safe in his presence and company from the slightest impertinence.

'My sister,' said Paul Featherstone, 'is one of the most remarkable women in the world. It is a privilege to be her brother. She thinks and cares for every one who comes within the radius of her influence, as the sun lights, warms, and attracts every planet in the solar system. But,' said Paul, and his mouth twitched, 'rare confusion am I making in my similitudes. The sun has no satellite, but the planet is allowed one or more. My sister, who has been married for over a twelvemonth, has lately acquired a little, a very tiny bright, and shining moon, which sails round her, and never leaves her; and my sister delights in the soft and silvery radiance of her little moon.'

'You speak, sir, as if the presence added to your own pleasure and light.'

'To be sure it does,' answered Paul, his face kindling with a sweet and happy brightness. 'A child in the house *is* a blessing from on high. I was out at night—I had, in fact, ridden for a doctor, and was returned—and as the groom took my horse, through the still, starry, dark-blue sky we saw a silvery streak; it described a curve, and was formed by a brilliant meteor. When my man saw that I was watching it, he said, "Folks do say that falling stars be little souls coming to babes out o' paradise." And sure enough, when I entered the house, I heard a faint sobbing. The soul had come, and found it dark and desolate here below—away from paradise.'

'You have no children of your own, sir?'

'I!' exclaimed Paul in surprise, and laughed. 'I have not a wife. I have not reached the point of considering it possible that I may have one. 'No,' he shook his head, 'I pity the woman that would take me. My ideal of womanhood is so high, that she would be ever on the tremble lest she fall short of it. I believe,' continued Paul, dropping into a meditative mood, 'that the characteristic of man is justice, and that of woman is self-abnegation. Excuse me if I seem to say a hard thing, but I do not observe in woman that rooted conscience of justice that I find inherent in men. But, on the other hand, I find immeasurable love in woman, a self-devotion that counteth not the cost, that will give up everything and think no merit lies in doing so. Man, on the contrary, can do a spasmodic act of self-denial, but cannot live a life of it. Man is naturally selfish; woman is instinctively unselfish.'

'And, sir, in evidence of man's natural selfishness, you insist on my partaking of your roast chicken.'

'I beg your pardon. In evidence of my natural justice I offer you half. I could not eat it all myself, you will allow that? I deny myself nothing. Whereas, if you had sat down to your cup of tea and one egg, and you had seen me sitting in the window fasting, you *could* not have broken the end of the egg or touched your cup. Your kind, pitiful eyes would have sought me, and striven to catch mine; and then, with a blush, you would have offered me your egg and untasted cup, and you would have

gone to bed perfectly happy because I had eaten one and emptied the other.'

Loveday winced at the reference to herself, but she smiled and said modestly, 'You judge our virtues higher than they deserve. Your justice is largely qualified with mercy.'

'Not at all,' answered Paul Featherstone. 'I do not pretend that every woman is a perfect pattern of self-abnegation, but that she is set in the key of which self-devotion is the dominant. Whatever be the melody, however varied the harmonies of her life, the dominant underlies the melody, and interpenetrates the harmonies; and at the last the whole piece comes—possibly after changes into other keys—back to the original, and dies away, as its only proper finish, on the dominant. It is the same with man, only the male key has justice for its ruling note. However wrongheaded a man may be, and however criminally he may act, the note of justice is vibrating, thrilling, heard and felt deep down in the depths of his conscience. He may drown it for a while in noise; but, as the noise ceases, the key-note is heard still sounding, and will sound as long as life lasts.'

'I have sometimes thought,' began Loveday; then hesitated, and ceased.

'Yes,' said Paul Featherstone, encouragingly. 'I entreat you to tell me your thought.'

'I have sometimes thought,' said Loveday, with lowered eyes, 'whilst I have been wool-working, that we poor women are embroidering our lives with all sorts of colours, and making of them various figures, but that there must be some common cross-thread on which we all elaborate the varied patterns of our humble lives. You have given me one of the threads, the warp or the woof, I know not which. Is there not another?'

'Yes,' answered Paul. 'Self-abnegation is the woof, religion is the warp. That is not naturally in men, as in women. On these two threads the whole carpet of life is embroidered; done in strange reversed mode, sometimes, as the Gobelin tapestry is wrought, when the maker sees nothing of the design which he is developing. He stands behind the threads, and thrusts his colours in and out—now this, now that—in a blind way, and only those on the

other side see the result. It is so with the soul within. Behind these threads, weaving life's beautiful Gobelin carpet, the soul stands and sees not the end to which it is working—beholds only ragged ends, and irregular threads, and ugly knots—whereas the world sees a beautiful, rich, and consistent whole.'

'I am afraid,' said Loveday, 'we must be content to weave our little lives into kettle-holders, not Gobelin tapestry.'

'And a kettle-holder saves the hand from being burnt,' answered Paul. 'So, many an insignificant modest life has been a hand-guard against much suffering.' Then, looking across the table, he said, 'I see that you have brought your blotting-book, and want to write letters. Do not let me interrupt you. I will go out and take a turn in the town, or, if no inconvenience to you here, will take the newspaper and read.'

'No inconvenience whatever,' said Loveday, readily. 'It is true that I have a couple of letters to write, and there is no ink in my room.'

Paul at once placed the rack of pens and the inkstand on the table, beyond the white table cloth, and rang for the waiter to remove the supper.

Loveday opened her book, took a couple of sheets of paper, and, spreading one before her, wrote to Mrs. Loveys. Loveday took a long time in writing this letter. It was well to let Madam know at once that the suit of Anthony was hopeless. She was resolved not to leave Mrs. Loveys and the young man in suspense, or in the delusion that she acquiesced in their arrangement. The sooner they were made aware that she could not accept him the better. Her conscience would be clear. She was thankful for the honour shown her—in her humble mind, she considered it an enormous condescension—but she could not resolve to think of the union as possible. To her brother she had not mentioned the offer, fearful lest he should try to persuade her to the sacrifice for the sake of his interest. Her faith in Dennis was so shaken that she admitted the possibility of this meanness. Yet, when the strange gentleman spoke of woman's self-devotion, she felt her cheeks burn, and was aware with shame that there was one act of self-devotion of which she was not capable. She could not

take Anthony Loveys. even for the love she bore to her brother. Had she, perhaps, sufficient of the spice of masculine justice in her soul to strengthen her against this, as more than a brother had a right to exact? Perhaps so.

The letter to Madam Loveys was a difficult letter to compose. Poor Loveday spoiled her first copy, and had to write a second. She thought long between each line she wrote, and was so engrossed in her thoughts as to completely forget the presence of the gentleman, who was seated in the background behind the newspaper.

As she considered, with her pen to her lips and one hand on the paper, the trace of her thoughts was visible in her pure face, like the fleeting shadows of the clouds during the day over the moor: never deep and threatening, always soft; a bloom, not a gloom; a varying beauty of colour in the pervading sunlight.

Paul Featherstone's eyes, irresistibly attracted to her, watched her, then returned to the newspaper. Paul was ashamed of himself for looking at her. He knew he ought not to do so, as she was unconscious of his presence, but the attraction was too strong for him to fight against it. There was something—he knew not himself what it was—in Loveday's face which drew his sympathy towards her. He suspected sorrow; he saw intelligence; and he recognised the guileless goodness of her soul by that instinct which exists in all cognate spirits.

Once he noticed a clear trickling tear issue from under her dark lash and roll down her cheek. Then the hand that held the newspaper trembled. Paul was full of pity for suffering, and he would have been glad to comfort the bruised heart of Loveday, if he knew what was her pain.

At length the letter was finished, and folded, and sealed with a wafer. Then she addressed it, put it aside, and wrote the second letter. This was done quickly, without long consideration.

When it was finished she stood up, and then started. She saw Paul Featherstone. She had completely forgotten him. He had said something about going out round the town, and she had perhaps fancied he was no longer in the room. He had remained without noise, and this had led to her error, if it was an error, and not absorption and forgetfulness.

She took up the two letters, intending to go out at once and post them; but Paul Featherstone rose at the same time.

'If you will allow me,' he said, 'I will take the letters for you to the office.'

'Thank you very much,' she replied. 'Only one will have postage to be paid on it—at least I suppose so. The other is to be left till called for.'

He looked at the directions, and smiled.

'You have afforded me a rare pleasure,' he said. 'I shall have to post but one of the letters. The second is addressed to me. I am "P. F."'

Loveday started, and looked at him. The colour went, then came, in her face.

'I need hardly say,' continued Paul Featherstone, 'that it will indeed be a proud thing for me if I can secure your kind, generous services for my sister. I am glad,' he said, after a pause, 'on two accounts; on my sister's, that she should have for her companion one to whom she is sure to cling, and whom she will treasure; on yours, that you should have the opportunity of knowing one whom it is a privilege to know.'

'Sir,' said Loveday, timidly, 'you will want references. You know nothing of my abilities.'

'I want no references,' answered Paul. 'None in this case are necessary.' He bowed.

'My brother,' faltered Loveday, 'is a surgeon.'

'And I,' said Paul, 'am one also. Unrecognised by the faculty, indeed, but I am a healer of men by natural gift from on high.'

'My name,' she said, 'is Loveday Penhalligan.'

'I am Paul Featherstone, of Marsland. My sister Juliot is Mrs. Rock. She was married just after Christmas twelvemonth to a Mr. John Rock, who lives with me. Miss Penhalligan, shall you be able to travel to-morrow? I am impatient to make you acquainted with my sister Juliot. I am sure you will love her—you cannot fail to love her—she is so good. We are a quiet family, and live in a quiet nook, out of the noise and rush of the current of life, but we are happy and peaceful; and, please God, the peace and happiness of that home will remain unbroken. It has been heightened and deepened by the addition of the little one who has risen on

our horizon. Did I say that he added to our peace? Well—happiness—hardly *quiet*. Miss Penhalligan, this is almost a joke.'

So Loveday went from the house of the surgeon, who was one by science, but without sympathy, to that of the physician, who was one by sympathy, but without science.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE THRESHOLD OF A SORROW

NEXT day Paul Featherstone and Loveday departed, the former on the box, the latter inside, the Stratton coach. At Stratton, Paul's horse and conveyance were awaiting him. He had left them there, when he was on his way to Launceston, on the double business of consulting his lawyer and finding a companion for his sister.

The letter to Madam Loveys had been despatched without its containing any further allusion to the advertisement of 'P. F.' than thanks to the lady for the copy of the paper sent. Loveday had deemed it as well not to say anything about her application till she heard whether it were successful. She resolved to write to Mrs. Loveys and to her brother from her destination, to inform them that she was settled, and to acknowledge her debt to the former for having directed her attention to the advertisement, which had so speedily answered her most sanguine wishes.

Loveday did not fail to notice the resemblance of the scenery to that of the home she had left. The character of the coast was the same, and the air, fresh and invigorating, was the same.

The evening was closing when she reached Marsland. Paul had been attentive to her throughout the journey, at every stoppage of the coach coming to the window to inquire how she was; and, in the gig, he interested her with his quaint conversation. At Stratton he pointed out to her Stamford Hill, the scene of the victory of the Royalists under Sir Bevil Grenville, in 1643. At Kilkhampton he showed her the valley and the woods where once stood Stowe House, the ancestral home of the Gren-

villes. The glimpses of the sea, with the evening sun gleaming on it, converting it into a sea of fire, were like those about Towan. She might almost have believed herself returning home but for the voice of the driver.

As the sun went down Marsland was reached, and a cold grey shadow was on the courtyard as Paul drove through the gateway into it.

'You are at my house,' said Paul, assisting Loveday to descend. 'Give me your hand, that I may lead you with a welcome over my threshold.'

He conducted her through the rude porch, with old-fashioned gallantry.

'How cold your hand is,' he said.

Loveday stood still. A sudden nervous trembling had come over her.

'Are you ill—overtired, Miss Penhalligan?'

She put her hand to her brow, to collect her thoughts, which left her for an instant, and answered, 'I am better. A momentary faintness, it is past.'

He took her hand and led her within. 'Welcome, Miss Penhalligan,' he said. 'In God's name I wish you peace and happiness, rest from care, and bright days in the future, across this threshold.'

She bent her head in acknowledgment.

'And now,' he said, 'for my sister.'

In a moment the door at the end of the hall opened, and Juliot scudded the length of it and fell into her brother's arms. 'Oh, Paul! I did not expect you home to-day.'

'Juliot,' said he, 'I have brought you a friend. This good, sweet lady has done us the honour and conferred on us the favour of paying us a visit, not to be a short one, we trust, sure that she will be a companion to you, and love and be loved by little Con.'

Juliot at once carried off Loveday to the room above the parlour—the room with the southern aspect, the room in which the spinet had stood. The instrument was not there now, it was removed to the drawing-room under it.

Loveday was given whatever she wanted; Juliot was full of thought and kindness; but, through all her eagerness to be hospitable, one desire prevailed and transpired.

'You will not mind, as soon as you can, without inconvenience, you will come and see the BABY.'

'I am ready now,' answered Loveday. 'What a pretty room this is.'

'Do you know, that in this room lay my husband sick for many days, before he was my husband. I was accustomed to sit in the window, and wait, and watch, and pray that he might recover. But then, I had no thought at all of him but as a sick man claiming our aid. The room has acquired for me a new charm since then. Mr. Rock is not here to-day. He is at a farm or property we have some little way off, called Stanbury. They are haymaking there, as we are here, and he has to watch the hay harvest there. In this part of the world everything depends on seizing the golden weather when it comes. The sun does not wait on our leisure.'

Then Juliot led Loveday along a passage to the nursery. 'I must tell you that this house has got a king now, reigning by right divine, and as an autocrat. We have to do homage at his little feet. Oh, Miss Penhalligan, they are the dearest little weeny feet! And to see the comical way in which the tiny toes work about and are never at rest! I could spend an hour in merely watching the little feet. But the hands are more beautiful still. You cannot look at them without falling to kiss them. His Majesty is asleep now. You will not disturb him in his sacred repose.'

She brought Loveday to the side of the cradle, an old-fashioned rocking cradle, in which Paul and herself, and perhaps their father, had slept in infancy. Loveday stooped over the child, and saw that its bright eyes were open. Directly, it began to coo like a dove and pat its hands on the coverlet excitedly, whilst dimples formed in the fat cheeks.

'The darling is awake!' exclaimed Juliot, 'and in a serene temper. How beautiful! How fortunate, Miss Penhalligan. I would not for the world have had you make first acquaintance with his Royal Highness when his mood is contrary. People, involuntarily, are governed by prepossessions formed on first sight. I am so glad you have seen my darling smiling and happy on this first interview.'

'Allow me to take him and throne him in my arms,' said Loveday. Seeing a smile on Juliot's face, she put her

hands into the crib and took the little fellow out. All Juliot's nerves quivered, and her heart stood still, till her eyes reassured her that Loveday knew how to hold a baby.

The little monarch was quite content to rest his head on the heart and be encircled by the arms of Loveday ; he crowed, and puckered up his mouth, and kicked and flapped, expressive of contentment.

'He was born in December, so he is now six months old,' said the delighted mother. 'Take that stool and sit on it, with the little bird nested on your lap. How cosy he is in your arms ! '

'He is not in the least shy. He is a precious little treasure.'

'Precious ! ' exclaimed Mrs. Rock. 'His price is above rubies. Everyone here values him unspeakably high. Paul quite adores him. I cannot give the maids a greater treat than to take him down into the kitchen for them to surround and admire. To-morrow we will carry him into the hay-field, and make sweet hay with him ; shall we not, my pet ? Shall we fling a bind of hay round your tiny neck, and draw the small head to us, and cover it with kisses ? Will you laugh and clap and chirp with joy ? '

Loveday sat with the child on her lap, looking at it. As when a vein has been wounded a rush of warm blood pours over the skin, and a mingled sensation ensues of pleasure and pain, so was it now with her. A stream of warm love poured from her heart, but she was sensible of an ache, unaccountable in her gentle breast.

'He takes happily to you,' said Juliot, 'and does not seem to concern himself much about me. Oh, the fickle fellow ! Con ! Con ! Look at your mother ! '

Loveday looked suddenly up at Mrs. Rock.

'His name is Constantine,' said Juliot. 'My dear husband had a fancy for it, though it is not his own name, he is called John ; nor do I hear that he had any relatives of that name. Paul did not disapprove. Paul says that Constantine was a king of Devon and Cornwall, who resigned his crown and went into a monastery in Scotland. No one knew there who he was, till one day a monk overheard him laughing, whilst grinding corn in a quern, and saying "What would my people say at home if they saw King Constantine grinding rye, like a donkey in a mill."

I did not myself care much for the name at first, but this rogue will make it sweet to me.'

Loveday bowed over the child, and drew it tight to her bosom, laid her face on it, and felt that love and pain were equal in her heart.

'Do you know the name Constantine?' asked Juliot.

'Yes,' answered Loveday, raising her face, 'it is a name that to me is very dear.'

'Have you had any one so-called whom you loved?'

Loveday paused.

'There is a ruined church dedicated to St. Constantine near my home, and I have been very happy there.'

The answer sufficed. Juliot asked no more; she saw that she had touched a tender point in Loveday's heart. 'I dare say I am very absurd,' she said, 'but I will have no nurse to baby; I do everything for him. You can understand, he is a great tie. In fact, I can do nothing else. But, he is too precious to be trusted in rough hands. Look at the weeny bones of the fingers—why, they can be no thicker than pins. Just fancy how easily one of them might be injured!' she shuddered. 'No, I must look after him myself, or have a lady to help me, and relieve me now and then. That is why my brother Paul has urged me to secure suitable assistance. He says that I am made a perfect slave to Constantine; that it must not be, I have other duties to attend to. Of course he is right. My brother is always right. And now, with his usual good fortune, he has lit upon you. I am sure we shall like each other. That is, I am sure I shall like you. Baby has decided the matter. He has accepted you as my substitute now and then; only now and then, understand, you fickle fellow!' shaking her hand at the child. Then it began to cry, and strain its arms towards its mother. 'There!' exclaimed Juliot, with a triumphant laugh, 'after all he wants to come to his mother! He is not going to desert her! He will not turn away his heart wholly from her! Though she does not object to his giving a part of it, a little part, to Miss Penhalligan.'

'Will you take the stool?' asked Loveday, rising.

'No, no,' answered Juliot, quickly, 'baby and I are quite content on the chair. Look! he is patting his hands! Bake a cake, bake a cake, baker's-man.' Then ensued that

loving play with the child, familiar to all women. Loveday put her face close to the little fellow and kissed, then drew it away again, and he crowed, and kicked, and went into fits of ecstatic laughter, and clapped his warm, soft little palms on her cheeks, and proceeded to munch her with his toothless gums.

The pride and delight of the mother were unbounded. Her heart warmed to Loveday, and she slipped into calling her by her Christian name before an hour was past.

'You drove with my brother from Stratton,' said Mrs. Rock. 'What a privilege! Paul is a remarkable man, whom it is an advantage to know. I am so glad you have made his acquaintance; you will learn to value him more and more every day, he is so good. Indeed, I look up to him with wonder and reverence, and the poor people regard him with extraordinary respect. You will not see my husband to-night; he does not return from Stanbury till the hay is carried. And now, if you do not mind going down into the hall, I will send the rogue to sleep. Then we will have supper, which I am sure both you and Paul need after your long journey.'

Loveday descended to the hall, and found Paul Featherstone there.

'You have seen the baby,' he said, 'and you have seen my sister. I am glad you know her; to make her acquaintance is an event in the life.'

Loveday's attention was arrested by the picture of Featherstone the Rover. She started.

'How very strange!' she said.

'That is the portrait of my uncle,' said Paul.

'How strange!' repeated Loveday, with her eyes still on the picture.

'The dress, no doubt, strikes you as peculiar.'

'I have seen—at least, it seems to me that I must have seen him.'

'That is quite impossible. He died long before you were born.'

Loveday considered. Then she said, thoughtfully, 'Yes, of course it is impossible, and yet——' Then a faintness and a shudder came over her, such as she had felt on crossing the threshold.

'You are not well,' said Paul, in alarm, 'you have

been overdone. Sit down. You must take a glass of wine.'

'Thank you,' answered Loveday, seating herself with her back to the picture, 'it is nothing; it is over again. It seemed to me as if I were stepping—I hardly knew whither—into some terrible, overwhelming horror. As if I were on the threshold of some great sorrow.'

CHAPTER XXXVII.

IN THE HAY-FIELD.

A DAY of cloudless brilliancy, a day of days for the haysel. The wind was off shore, and therefore the sea was still, and reflected the white distant cliffs of Lundy, and the passing sail. The air was fragrant with hay. There had been a succession of beautiful days, and the farmers were making the most of it—all but a few laggards, noted for invariably cutting when they ought to be sowing.

Loveday was occupied through the greater part of the morning unpacking her box, and arranging her possessions in the room assigned to her. This was the same into which Juliot had first shown her—the same that Constantine had occupied. It was the best bedroom, reserved for visitors, but the Featherstones had no strangers staying with them. They had no acquaintances at a distance, and few in their immediate neighbourhood.

She had some little ornaments of her own, relics of the home where she had spent her childhood with her mother. She had removed nothing that she might have laid claim to by right from the sitting-room at Nantsillan, only the trifles of her own bedroom, which her brother would not miss.

She came, when she had done, into the nursery, and insisted on taking little Con into the garden, the pretty garden on the southern slope, walled in, with its old-fashioned flowers. Paul was passionately attached to flowers; and he had his beds of herbs—simples, which he used, after the advice of old Culpepper. Every walk and bed in the garden was scrupulously cared for, weeded and trim; and herbs and flowers repaid the attention shown them. Nothing gave Paul greater delight than to spend a

fine morning in his garden. 'When man was in a state of innocency,' he said, 'God put him in a garden; and through a garden, methinks, we steal back to innocency.'

All Loveday's anxieties, and the strange misgiving that had come over her on the preceding evening, had passed away. She was very happy and hopeful. Not a word had been said about money—the amount of remuneration for her services. As with Constantine, so with Loveday, this was left undetermined; but Loveday knew as well that Paul would overpay her services, as he knew that she would undervalue them.

In the garden she saw Mr. Featherstone, in his plain grey suit and blue worsted stockings, with a spud, engaged on one of the beds. He came towards her at once, and said:

'You have a great privilege and responsibility, Miss Penhalligan, in the custody of this urchin. Every responsibility is tied to a blessing, and there is no blessing unencumbered with a duty. "What God hath joined, let not man put asunder." As this little fellow grows up, we shall have to use the utmost circumspection to provide that he grows aright. Look here, Miss Penhalligan' (he stooped, and picked a tender double-leaf). 'Do you know what this is? It is the seed-leaf of a plant. I have plucked it, and it will never now come to life. It has been killed, and I know not of what nature it was. The soul of a child is sown thick with seeds, and these seeds spring up rapidly, developing thus double-leaves, from which you can hardly tell what their promise is. You will have to use the utmost care not to pluck up the good along with the tares.'

'I hope,' said Loveday, 'that the child's little soul will become like this trim and pleasant garden, where nothing grows but what is healthful and beautiful.'

'It cannot fail to be other,' said Paul Featherstone, 'with two such gardeners as you and Juliot.'

Then he fell to thinking, leaning on his spud, with his eyes on the ground, and seemed forgetful of the presence of another. After a while he drew two circles in the gravel with the end of his spud, the circles cutting each other, so as to form a long and narrow ellipse.

'Man stands,' said Paul, 'at the intersection of the two

spheres, the material and the spiritual, the natural and the supernatural. There' (he made a mark with the tool), 'there stands little Con now, and he will either stand there all his days, or be drawn away to the centre of one circle or the other. All early training must be towards the maintenance of equilibrium, towards the education of man to perfection—that is, to live equally in both spheres. I think I said to you the evening we were first acquainted that woman was naturally more religious than man. That is, she has her place more on the spiritual side of the ellipse, and, therefore, on her the spiritual centre exerts a greater attraction. The tendency of man is to gravitate more and more towards the material; and if once he passes out of the spiritual sphere beyond that curve' (he indicated what he meant with the spud) 'then he is a man with reason—intelligence, may be—but without soul any more. He is outside the spiritual sphere. The tie or attraction between him and the spiritual centre is broken. There is no longer attraction outside a sphere. This is what I want, what I pray, that our little babe may from infancy be so turned that the centre of the spiritual circle may attract him more and more through life, till'—he drew his tool along the gravel—'till he passes out of the material circle, he has traversed that arc, and the gross things of life affect him no more.'

'I suppose,' said Loveday, 'that the nearer one is drawn to either centre, the stronger the attraction becomes, and the more rapid the movement towards it.'

'It is so,' answered Paul. Then he caught the child from her, and held it above his head in his strong arms, with the face to the sky, and in the brilliant sun. 'See!' he said. 'Never hold the child with its eyes on shadow; always set its face to the light. That is the great secret of life's training.' He kissed the babe tenderly, and returned it to Loveday's arms; then he said, 'You understand me, for you have your face towards the centre of spirit and life and light, and so has Juliot.'

'And Mr. Rock?'

'I do not judge any man,' answered Paul, and resumed his spud and walked away.

Loveday noticed a slight look of disappointment on his earnest, kind face. It was not the first time she had

observed this; whenever allusion had been made to his brother-in-law the look had come over him, as a faint and very transient shadow.

Then Loveday, watching Paul at his bed of herbs, standing in the full sunlight, thought how different was his theory of life from that of her brother. Paul looked at the light, and Dennis's face was set towards the shadow. Presently Mr. Featherstone returned to her. He had been thinking whilst working, and, pointing to the space between the arcs, drew a line, cut at each end by the circumference of a circle, and said, 'That is the measure of man's free will. When he passes beyond the curve his power of volition ceases; he is inevitably drawn to the centre. We oscillate between the arcs. Hark! I am wanted.'

He stood listening, and Loveday heard the tramp of a galloping horse along the road, then down the avenue.

In another moment a man, excited and hot, came into the garden, holding a handkerchief.

'Please, your honour,' he said, 'John Vosper have a-gone and cut hisself bad wi' a scythe in the leg, and us can't stop the flow of blood noways; so I've brought this to your honour.'

Mr. Featherstone took the kerchief within both his hands. His face became grave, and his eyes fixed, and his look abstracted. He passed the kerchief once between his palms, and handed it back to the man.

'Ride back as fast as you can,' he said, 'and bind this about his leg. The blood, however, is already stayed. Do not touch the kerchief with more than the tips of your fingers; ride holding it at arm's length.'

When the man was gone, Loveday looked at Paul Featherstone with amazement.

'I am obliged to remain at home during hay and corn harvests,' he said. 'So many accidents occur, and I like to be where I may be found at once.'

'Do you mean that—you have really stopped the bleeding of this man Vosper's leg?'

'Yes,' answered Paul, with wonder at her doubt; 'of course I have—yet not I; the power given me has done it. It never fails. Not I—no, not I.'[1]

[1] Lest the author should be charged with transgressing the bounds of truth in this account, he assures the reader that such a method of arresting

Paul was about to return to his work, when the garden gate was again opened, and a poor young man hobbled in on crutches.

'Good morning, Tooke. Come to have your knee struck?'

'Yes, your honour; it be a deal easier since your honour have blessed 'n.'

'Sit down on the bench, James,' said Featherstone; and, kneeling on one knee before the cripple, he laid his hand on the swollen joint, and as he did so the same fixed, far-away look came into his eyes that Loveday had noticed when he had the kerchief between his palms.

'I seem to feel the pain drawed out by your finger ends,' said the lad. 'I know exact to a line where your honour's fingers have rested; there be no hurting there, but lines o' ache where they have not touched.'

'Is the swelling gone down, James?'

'O yes, your honour—gone down powerful.'

'That will do for to-day; come again to-morrow. Now go round to the kitchen and stay there, and tell the maids you are to have your dinner. Do not stint the beef, James.'

The next to arrive were two women with a baby.

'The little chap have got the thrush,' said the mother. 'Us have took 'n and passed 'n at new moon three times under a bramble as is growed to both ends in the ground, but all to no good. Us have gotten naught by it but a lot o' scratches.'

'And you deserve them,' said Paul. 'You have no right to have recourse to superstitious methods. Superstition is sinful. How can you expect a cure if you apply to such unblessed remedies? Give me the child. Open its mouth; I will put my finger in.' When he had done this, he gave the infant back to the mother. 'There,' he said, 'you need not return to me; the eruption will begin to disappear to-day, and in a couple of days the child will be well. Ask the dairy-maid to give you a quart of new milk.'

The next to arrive was an old woman with sore eyes.

hæmorrhage is resorted to still in the West of England, and he has known persons such as Paul Featherstone constantly resorted to as thus described—and practising successfully.

'Betty,' said Featherstone, 'go every morning and wash your eyes in the water of the Holy Well. Now see if the cook can give you a little dinner. You have had a long, hot walk. If you cannot eat the meat, there is pudding you will like.'

That the beef, and the milk, and the pudding had anything to do with the drawing of patients to Marsland, or with the cure of the under-fed, Featherstone did not suppose; nor, to do them justice, did the sick attribute their healing to anything other than the touch of his hand. Loveday, who had seen nothing of the self-seeking in her own visitors, thought that in this case there may have been deception, not in Paul Featherstone himself—he was absolutely sincere, and believed thoroughly in the powers lodged in him—but in the patients. She ventured to say as much, sure that her remark would not be taken ill.

'Do you not think, Mr. Featherstone, that the sick may come as much for what they can get in your kitchen as in this your consulting-room?'

'Perhaps,' he replied, quite undisturbed by the suggestion. 'No motives are wholly pure; they are always more or less double, more or less charged with earthly particles. My motives are never absolutely transluceut; all men's motives are like water—analyse, and there is something in the clearest; but then, the only perfectly pure water is that which has been distilled, and that is undrinkable.'

In the afternoon Juliot and Loveday went together to the hay-field, carrying the baby. The harvest was nearly over, the last of the fragrant loads were being taken home, and tea and saffron buns were carried into the field for the men. Most of the servant-maids were there as well, raking the hay together, laughing and joking with the men.

Every now and then a rake was dropped, and one of the young men was seen with a whisp of twisted hay pursuing a girl, trying to catch and hold her with the hay-loop whilst he kissed her. The pressure of work was over, the strain was relaxed, a little romp and relaxation were allowable now.

Juliot and Loveday sat under the shade of some trees, beneath a hedge wreathed with pink wild rose and honeysuckle, and with clusters of meadow-sweet, white, scattering their powdery pollen on the arms that brushed them,

climbing the steep hedge-bank as refugees from the all-destroying scythe.

The yellow evening sun bathed the hayfield in bands striking through the trees; the doves were cooing in the wood; the butterflies dancing about the dried grass, and then fluttering away to the fresh flowers in the hedgerows. A bumble-bee in brown and yellow deep pile velvet was humming round the baby as though it thought honey was to be gathered from it—in reality attracted by the wreath of wild rose Loveday had made for his white washing hat, that would fall flapping over the little fellow's face, and make him growl in protest.

Loveday was very happy. Her clouds seemed to have parted and rolled out of her sky. The delight of having a baby to worship and play with, and of having one so sweet, womanly, and sympathetic as Juliot to talk to, filled her heart to the brim. For a while the cares of the past were lost sight of; she gave herself over to the unmixed pleasure of the present. The two ladies were seated a little way from the harvesters; the laughter and calls lost harshness, and were wafted to them as pleasant music by the fragrant air, along with strands of grass, and seeds of hawk-weed, and black leaves of meadow clover.

The maids had lighted a fire, and slung a kettle, to make the tea, and the white smoke rose above the hedge in a thick curl, and was then dispersed as a blue vapour through the wood.

Every kind of distraction was offered to the baby. A chain of daisies was made by Loveday, and suspended round his neck, to be at once torn to pieces by his impatient hands; dandelion 'clock' heads were puffed, to ascertain the hour; the golden buttercup was held in the sun under his fat chin, to prophesy whether he would love butter; a tiger moth, with yellow, crimson, and black wings, was suffered to creep unmolested along Loveday's hand, till the little fellow made a dab at it with his, and then the insect, startled, flew away. Honeysuckle trumpets were picked, and the sweet drop expressed on baby's lips; then the little red tongue was poked out and curled about the lips, much as a lizard protrudes his tongue to catch up its food. Loveday's gold watch-chain was suddenly laid hold of, and wrenched, and almost broken. Out flew the watch Mrs.

Gaverock had given her, and that was held first to one ear, then the other. Nothing satisfied Con for long. Some new distraction was demanded every minute, and the ingenuity of the mother and Loveday taxed to the uttermost.

Paul Featherstone remained at home till Constantine arrived.

'Done the haysel at Stanbury,' said the latter joyously. 'First-rate crop. and splendidly carried. How are you getting on here?'

'Very well indeed. The last loads are now returning. Will you come with me to the field?'

'Yes. Is my wife there with the baby?'

'And her companion,' said Paul. 'I have had the best success, John Rock. Providence has blessed us in this as in all we do. I do not believe if I had the world to pick from I could have found one better fitted for the post she is designed by us to fill. She has won her way already to Juliot's heart, and little Con is as content with her as in the arms of his mother.'

'Where did you pick her up?'

'At Launceston.'

'Was she well recommended?'

'Her face, her voice, her whole appearance, were her best recommendation. You cannot look at her and not trust her.'

'What is her name?'

'Penhalligan.'

'What!' Constantine's heart stood still

'Come with me—I am going to the hayfield—and you shall see and judge for yourself.'

Paul Featherstone did not observe the alarm in the face of his brother-in-law. He put on his hat and went out at the door. Constantine followed. 'It is impossible,' he muttered. 'There is no occasion to be uneasy. There are hundreds of Penhalligans beside Loveday.' He plucked up courage at the thought, and strode alongside of Paul. But he did not speak to him. He was busied with his own uneasy thoughts and alarms. He asked no more questions. He was afraid to do so, as he was unable for some moments to command his voice.

They reached the harvest-field. The last load of hay

was being heaped on the waggon. Paul went towards the men.

'There,' he said, pointing to the shade under the hedge, 'there they are. Go and make Miss Penhalligan's acquaintance.'

Constantine walked in the direction indicated. He could see his wife with the baby in her arms seated on the bank. The back of the other lady was towards him, and she was bent, so that he could not make out her form.

Loveday was, indeed, crouching before the little child, counting the buttons of its dress, saying slowly, as she went from one to the other, 'Tinker—tailor—soldier—sailor—gentleman—apothecary—ploughboy—thief. My pet is not—never can be that. Tinker—tailor—will he be a soldier? Not a cruel soldier, to kill and be killed. Sailor, to be tossed on the deep sea and wrecked?' She sighed. 'Gentleman? Of course, of course! nothing else; my golden boy can be nothing else but a gentleman—the sweetest, dearest——'

'Loveday,' said Juliot, interrupting the other who, in a transport of love and happiness, had clasped the tiny gentleman in her arms and was covering him with kisses. 'Loveday, my husband.'

Loveday rose to her knees, without looking round, then to her feet, stood, turned, and was face to face with Constantine!

For one moment—but it seemed to him an hour—they confronted each other in silence, then, without a cry, without a word, Loveday fell, as though he had struck her down with an axe.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

AT THE GATE.

Constantine hovered irresolute whether to help Loveday to rise or to turn and escape. His mind was in confusion. He knew that a great danger menaced him, but he had no readiness of resource to make an attempt to escape from it. Juliot had not a suspicion of the cause of Loveday's fall; she attributed it to a turn of the ankle or a trip in a root, and she asked anxiously if she were hurt.

'John, give her your hand. What is the matter, dear? Have you hurt yourself?' She was unable to assist her, as she held the baby.

But Loveday, herself, rose unassisted. Constantine held out his hand, but she did not accept it. She pressed both her palms to her brow, as though by the pressure to assure herself that she was awake and in her senses, and not the prey to a horrible delusion. She looked into Constantine's eyes to be certain that it was he, himself—her husband, esteemed dead—who stood before her. She read the confirmation in his confusion and dismay.

Then she turned away. Accustomed for many years to self-control, but never before tried as she was tried now, her powers of restraint over herself did not wholly desert her. She said nothing; she could not speak; she could scarce see. It was as though the smoke from the fire that had been lighted for the haysel tea-drinking had blown before her eyes; she looked into a mist; sounds she heard as from a distance.

'Loveday,' said Juliot, 'you are ill, you look death-like. I entreat you, go home.'

She did not stir, she moved her lips, and held out her hands mechanically, to take the child.

'No,' said Juliot. 'Indeed, and indeed you shall not. You were overtired with the journey yesterday, and the day before. You turned faint last evening, Paul told me. I am sure you are not well; go home.'

But still the words, though they entered her ear, met with no response. She heard them, but they struck on her ear without her knowing what their meaning was.

Juliot was alarmed at her appearance.

'John,' she said, 'give her your arm, take her home; she is very much upset by the journey, and the sun has been hot. Go, dear Loveday, go with him. I insist on it.'

'If you insist, yes,' answered Loveday, dimly conscious that she had been given an order.

Juliot was distressed. 'I did not mean to speak harshly, only in your own interest. John, take her with you.'

'I shall be better directly,' said Loveday, recovering her composure slightly; 'I should like some cold water.'

'You shall have some. John, take her to the spring,' said Juliot, tenderly. 'Lean on him, dear; he is strong

and will support you, and a few steps will do you good—it will enable you to recover yourself.'

Constantine drew Loveday's arm through his, and hurried her away ; he was nervous, alarmed, eager to get her out of the field before Paul saw that she was unwell, lest he should come after her, and interfere with his having a few words with her in private. He looked over his shoulder as he went along, and pressed Loveday to walk faster than she was able, till they were in the lane alone. Then he somewhat relaxed his speed ; then also she withdrew her hand from his arm, and walked at his side in silence. He could not speak. What to say, how to excuse his conduct, he knew not.

She did not turn her face to him, she walked with her arms by her sides, and her eyes fixed in a lustreless stare before her. She would have walked into the hedge at the turn of the lane if he had not touched and turned her. The lane descended into the coomb ; a gate to the west allowed an orange belt of sunlight to fall across it, and strike on the little stream, here only a spring which shot over a stone mantled with the greenest moss, and fell a few feet into a drain which passed under the way. The rock about the spring was overhung with delicate fern, now shining in the sun, which struck on it obliquely.

Loveday saw and staggered to the spring ; she could go no farther, her strength was deserting her, and her consciousness failing. She clung to an ash root in the hedge that was clear of earth. Constantine filled his hat with water and sprinkled the cold drops in her face. She revived, looked at him, at first with gratitude, then with fear. Her first instinct was thankfulness for a kindness shown her, her first impulse to acknowledge it ; but this was followed by the recollection of who it was who helped her, and the terror that this knowledge awoke overwhelmed every other thought.

When she was somewhat recovered, she remained leaning against the hedge, clinging to the grey ash root. The orange evening sun was on her pale face, and sparkled in the water-drops that hung in her hair, on her lashes, and that trickled over her cheeks. She did not wipe them away, she did not feel them. They were not tears. She could not cry. They were the fresh drops from

the spring. She looked with unswerving eyes before her, at a delicate quivering maidenhair fern that caught the draught through the gate, and swayed and shuddered and flashed in the sun, then dropped out of it. She saw this, and followed every vibration of the frond in all that followed. She was not interested in the fern, but she saw and noted it, and to her last hour that dancing frond of fern was associated in her mind with the interview with Constantine at the spring.

'I am very, very sorry for this,' faltered he.

She made no answer. What could she answer? Her bosom rose and fell, and every inspiration was like a knife piercing her. The mental anguish translated itself into physical suffering, so closely were the forces correlated. She stood, as Paul had said, in two spheres, and spiritual and bodily anguish were as one to her in this supreme hour.

'Loveday,' he continued, 'why do you not look at me? Why do you not speak? I suppose you considered me dead.'

She slightly bent her head.

'I was wrecked, Loveday—that is, I was washed off the keel of the "Mermaid" and was picked up insensible by the boat of Paul Featherstone. I was much hurt; my head had struck the side. I lay for a long time unconscious, and when I came round to life I was here, at Marsland.'

She slightly moved her hand on the root of the ash, in token that she was listening. She had no glove on the hand, the sun shone warm over the long, delicate, sensitive fingers—fingers that spoke of a refined mind.

'I was here,' Constantine went on. 'Paul Featherstone made me his steward to Stanbury, and then he forced his sister on me. I did not want to do what was wrong, but I am weak, I dare say you know that, and the temptation came to me. It was very wrong of Paul Featherstone proposing it to me. He ought to have known better. What was I to say when I had set before me the prospect of dismissal and beggary, if I did not come to his terms?'

Loveday looked steadily at him, and her lips opened.

'Constantine,' she said, 'this is not true.'

'It is true,' he answered, his eyes falling before hers. 'That is—he did not know, of course, about you, and he made a mistake about my name. However, that is passed. It is no use crying over spilt milk. What has been done

is past undoing. I am very sorry, and I know I have acted very wrongly. I am sure my conscience has reproached me for it over and over again. I cannot help myself, the thing is done ; and, now, if I knew what was the right thing to do, I would do it ; but you see, yourself, Loveday, what a predicament I am in. Paul Featherstone is a very strict-thinking, pedantic fellow. When he knows all, I shall be handed over by him to the constables, I shall be sent to prison, tried at the assizes for bigamy, and be transported for life. That is what will be my fate when this becomes known. I do not see how Featherstone can act otherwise.'

'What am I to do! O my God! my God!' cried Loveday, clasping her hands on the root.

'He must give me in charge ; then comes the disgrace to my name and family. My father—my poor, poor mother! What will Gerans say? It will cover him with shame. He will never hold up his head again. As for my mother, it will kill her.' He sighed and moaned. 'There is only one chance of escape,' he said, 'and that is for you to hold your tongue. If you tell all, I am not gained to you. You lose me for ever, as I shall be sent as a convict to Van Diemen's Land to work in chains, in prison clothes till I die. What then will be the advantage of your telling? None to yourself, and infinite distress to others. If you want revenge on me, very well, you shall have it.'

She raised her hand deprecatingly.

'Whom else do you desire to punish—my mother? I thought you liked her. Gerans?—he is your brother's friend. Then consider these people here. Tell the truth, and what is Juliot? A betrayed woman with a bastard.'

Again she raised her hand deprecatingly.

'Paul Featherstone is a just man, and he will believe it his duty before God and man to bring me to justice. Let him do so, and cover two—three families with ignominy, his family, mine, and yours. You will come in for the disgrace as well, remember, for you will be indicated as the woman with a convict husband.'

Loveday covered her face with her hands. She was not thinking of herself, she was thinking of Paul Featherstone, of his horror when he knew the truth, of the unspeakable shame that would fall on Juliot and her babe.

She thought also of Mrs. Gaverock, and she knew that if told that her loved Constantine was alive and a felon, with a blasted name, she would die of a broken heart. She thought also of honest Gerans, of his trouble about Rose. Was she going to add to this trouble?

She raised her head, and again stood looking intently at the quivering maidenhair fern. Her soul trembled like it, but unlike it, in darkness, not in light.

By a cruel fatality the happiness of all those whom she loved, and who had been good to her, was put into her hands to destroy with a word: of Mrs. Gaverock, Gerans, Rose, Paul Featherstone, Juliot, and the little babe. She would bring shame also on Madam Loveys, and stupid Anthony. She had herself desired that her marriage with Constantine should be kept secret. Now was she to publish it to bring about general dismay, and to cover those she loved and regarded with dishonour?

'Hark!' cried Constantine, 'I hear the cheers. The last load is made up. The waggon is in motion, the harvesters will be here. Loveday, have pity on me; do not be cruel!'

They could hear the creak of the wheels of the laden waggon on the road, the shouts of the waggoners, and the clash of the ironshod hoofs on the stones.

'Loveday!' said Constantine, trembling and turning cold, 'if you have any love for me still, keep silence for a few days only, till I have considered what is to be done. I shall find a way out of this desperate difficulty, if you give me time. Oh, Loveday, we are all weak, frail, sinful creatures! Forgive me as you hope to be forgiven yourself!'

'Self-abnegation is the woof of woman's life,' Paul had said to her; his words, or the tenor of them, rose in her mind, and strengthened her to embroider a little more of her pure story over that sad thread.

She could not speak, but she held out her hand.

Constantine grasped it and said, 'Thank you, Loveday this is like you.'

Then, without a word or a look at him, without returning the pressure of his hand, she went up the lane to the avenue and gate of Marsland.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE WOOF.

PAUL FEATHERSTONE came on before the waggon, and caught Constantine up at the gate and spring. He had not left the spot where Loveday had extended to him her hand in assurance that she would keep silence—for a while.

Twice had he persuaded her not to speak, to be secret about their marriage. The first time when they were married, now—when she found herself cruelly betrayed. The imposition of silence on her on the former occasion had brought with it a train of sorrow, the imposition of silence on her now was the only means of averting dishonour and misery indescribable. Would she keep her promise? For how long would she restrain her tongue? What way was to be found out of this tangle? Constantine's head was full of questions, to none of which could he give an answer. He must have time to find a means of escape from the dilemma. He was incapable of seeing any at present in his then condition of dismay and bewilderment.

'What is this I hear?' asked Paul. 'Miss Penhalligan is ill, Juliot tells me; you were to have escorted her to Marsland. Why are you standing here, Rock?'

'She is better. She has gone on by herself. She did not require my aid. A fit of giddiness soon over.'

'Ah! something of the sort came upon her yesterday. Poor soul, she has been overstrained in mind and body! There is a look in her face as if she had dipped her foot into the bitter waters of Marah.'

'I know nothing of that,' said Constantine; 'I dare say the journey has upset her. She will be right again in a day or two. Do not tax her energies too much for a while. I will speak to Juliot to spare her.'

'You should not have allowed her to go on alone,' said Paul, reproachfully, and the same shade of disappointment that Loveday had noticed stole across his face. 'Juliot trusted you to see her to the house in safety, and you should have fulfilled exactly the trust.'

Constantine's lip curled, but he said nothing.

Paul and he walked on. As they ascended the hill the former turned to him, 'I beg your pardon, Rock; I ought not to have reproved you so sharply. She may have laid her commands on you, which would alter the case. I was alarmed for her. A fit might take her, unawares, and she fall on the hard stones. I could not endure the thought, and it was present to me when I rebuked you.'

'Say no more about it.'

'And yet I am not sorry that I was led to speak. I do wish, John Rock, that you were more reliable. My words are kindly meant, take them kindly. We have all our faults, I chief of all, and if you blame me where I have done amiss I will accept the admonition thankfully and endeavour to amend. I deal with you as I would be dealt by. John, during the past eighteen months I have had brought to my mind irresistibly, and involuntarily, the story of the son who said to his father, "I go, sir, and went not."'

'Had you not better apply to the Bishop for a licence to preach?' asked Constantine, irritably.

'No,' answered Paul, insensible to irony, 'I have no wish for that. My vocation is for the life of a recluse, not for a public career. But you are evading the subject, Rock.'

'I am getting too old to be lectured.'

'But not to learn. We are learning all our days, correcting what is wrong, and acquiring what is deficient. Do not resent what I have said.' He stood still and looked back along the lane. 'The dew is beginning to fall. I wish Juliot would come. I want to hear how our friend is. Will you go back, John, and help to carry the baby, or shall I?'

'You seem so anxious about the young lady that you had better go on, Featherstone, and peep or listen at the keyhole, to learn how she is. We are none of us, you know, too old to learn.'

Paul Featherstone looked at him with astonishment. He understood neither his tone, nor the sneer in his words, but they grated on him.

'I do not take your meaning, John Rock—I never pry and listen. I could not do so. You have greatly mis-

understood me, to think such a thing possible. I want to know how Miss Penhalligan is, because she is ill and because she is my guest.'

Constantine scarcely waited for the end of his sentence. He walked back to meet his wife with the child.

Paul turned towards the house. 'He has hurt me,' said Paul. 'But he did not mean it. He is thoughtless.'

Loveday on reaching the house had gone to her room, and thrown herself on the bed. She could not cry. She was as one half-stunned. She was conscious of what had taken place, but she felt a numbness in her brain, which prevented her from fully realising it, as it affected herself, and from forming a resolution for the future. The discovery had been so sudden, so overwhelming, so utterly unexpected.

She trembled, and the bed shook under her; she had folded her hands and lay with her cheek on them, looking at the wall with wideopen eyes. Her breath came fast, and her pulses throbbed in her temples, and each throb was like the stroke of a hammer against her head. Paul Featherstone had told her that the science of life was to turn the face to the light; but where was light to which she could look? There was open to her only an abyss of gloom. Instinctively she had turned, as she lay on her bed, away from the window to look at a blank and shadowed wall. Everything before her was blank. There was no exit, no escape.

So Juliot found her lying, when she came to her. At the sound of Juliot's voice a shudder, more violent and convulsive than her continuous trembling, shook Loveday's frame; and when Mrs. Rock bent over her to ask how she was, Loveday with horror thrust her away, but immediately repented, sat up, and held forth her arms, entreating pardon.

Juliot asked if she felt herself better? Yes—she was better. If she wanted anything? No—nothing but to be alone.

At this Juliot retired, and Loveday reproached herself for having answered uncourteously. She wanted nothing, nothing whatever but that. What else could she desire? Constantine was lost to her more fatally than if he had

been engulfed, as she had believed, by the sea. Then she could think of him as still her own Constantine, although in another world, and cherish her love of him and the remembrance of his love. Now he was lost wholly to her. Her respect for him was gone, she was robbed of that as she had been robbed of her respect for her brother. She loved Constantine still, and she loved Dennis still, but the love for both was a pitiful, sorrowing love, a love that stooped, not that stood on tiptoe. She could not wish to have Constantine to herself, for she could no longer honour him. Even if she had desired him, she could not have him, for to assert her claim was to condemn him to transportation.

She remembered the morning when she was married in St. Sidwell's Church at Exeter, and the solemn sincerity with which she had vowed to hold to Constantine till death parted them. How could she be true to her oath if she now renounced him; yet how could she be true to him without committing great cruelty to others? She was morally bound to keep her promise, and yet, it seemed to her, she would be morally wrong if she asserted her claim.

Her thoughts went round and round in her brain, the same thoughts, never getting any farther, sometimes revolving more furiously than at other times, but not for a moment stationary, as though within her skull was a mill-wheel that rushed and scattered the foam about, now swiftly, now slowly, always going, never at rest. She lay perfectly motionless on her bed, with her feet crossed, and her hands closed, and her cheek on them, but her thoughts whirled incessantly and could not be arrested.

So she lay till darkness had closed in; then again Juliot came to her room, this time with a cup of tea and some toast. Loveday sat up on the bed, but her hand shook so that she spilt the contents of the cup, and her throat rose and prevented her from swallowing the toast.

'You are ill,' said Juliot, with anxiety; 'let me send for a doctor.'

'I am not ill,' answered Loveday; 'I am unhappy. I shall be better to-morrow.'

Then she laid her head again on her hands, and her hands on the pillow, in the same position, and said no more.

And again, impatient at the interruption, the wheel of thoughts went rushing round, and round, and round again in her hot, aching brain. She was unconscious that Juliot was still in the room, standing by the bed watching her. Juliot remained some minutes with her eyes on her, perplexed and uneasy. Presently she said, 'My dear girl, you must undress and go to bed. You cannot lie there. Let me help you off with your gown.'

Then Loveday shuddered and held her hands to her bosom to prevent Juliot from touching her dress, and uncovering the blue silk thread, and seeing the gold wedding-ring that hung there.

'No! no!' she exclaimed with such terror in her voice that Juliot desisted. 'Let me alone.'

'I will not let you alone unless you promise me to go to bed. You are either ill now, or are on the eve of an illness.'

'I promise; I promise,' gasped Loveday, and she sat on her bed, and watched Juliot with wide, alarmed eyes, till she left the room. Then only mechanically did she undress, and lie down.

Sleep she could not. Even whilst engaged removing her clothes, she was conscious of the revolution of the wheel of thoughts, speculations, doubts, conjectures, in her head; every thought, and doubt, and imagination was armed with a blade that cut, like the spikes of a catherine-wheel, that tore and tortured her relentlessly. And now to her former thoughts there came another, an added dread, lest she should become really ill, unconscious or delirious, and that in this state the ring in her bosom would be seen, and her tongue might blab the secret. She folded her hands over the ring, and pressed them and it to her breast, and the ring became white hot, and burnt its way, little by little, deeper and yet deeper in through the tender skin and flesh and buried itself in the palpitating heart, and there it spun round and round and threw out drops of molten gold, burning with unspeakable anguish, drop on drop, drop on drop, but never would melt away.

She considered whether, in her box, in her drawers, in a book, anywhere, there was a written line that would reveal the secret, should curious eyes search them whilst she was unconscious. No—there was nothing; all Constan-

tine's letters were destroyed. There was nothing but the ring to betray her.

Through all the tossings, and turnings, and fire of her brain there ran the dominant thought of self-abnegation. Her first duty was towards her husband, to save him from the terrible consequences of his own guilt. Her self-sacrifice must assume a form never contemplated by her as possible—she must sin for him, she must go from her marriage vow, and give him up. In sickness and in health, for richer, for poorer, for better, for worse, she could not have and hold him, she must not cherish him. She must resign her proper place at his side, her proper office as his comforter and stay and cherisher, to another, against her vow. It must be so. She saw no escape from this, no alternative but one of misery and humiliation for others. One must suffer or many. She would accept the burden, and the sin that attended it. The sacrifice was more than she could bear—or almost more—but she felt that she was bound to bear it. The hours passed, and she could not sleep ; she was still thinking, the wheel spinning and tearing in her head, the ring burning and sinking and melting in her heart, and now and then she was aware that her self-command was slipping from her. The tension was more than her nerves could endure without giving way. That was now her chief terror, lest she should have fever fall on her and sweep her away into unconsciousness.

Where could she hide the ring? What could be done with it? It must not be seen.

When Juliot came down from Loveday's room for the last time that night, she said to her brother, who was waiting anxiously for her report, 'I am not at all satisfied with leaving her alone. I cannot make her out. Poor soul, some acute suffering seems to be endured by her, with a determination not to let it be known of what nature it is nor what is its extent. Yet I cannot be with her. She entreats me to leave her, and she will endure no servant with her. What is to be done?'

'Go to bed, Juliot,' answered Paul. 'Baby is your charge. I will sit up in the parlour under her room, and if she is stirring I shall hear. If she is worse I shall know, and can summon assistance.'

So it was settled. Paul remained awake in the house,

reading and meditating in the drawing-room. The spinet was there, but he did not venture to touch it, lest he should disturb the sick girl above.

The night was as lovely as the day. The sky was without a cloud, and the full moon shone down into the tiny quadrangle into which the windows looked. Paul had the shutters back, so that he could see the moonlight in the court, and could look up to the pure sky and a solitary star that hung in it. On the opposite side of the quadrangle was a window, and an orange gleam from it showed where the baby slept with Juliot, and a rush-light burnt through the hours of darkness.

All in the house were asleep ; not a sound had he heard in the room above. He trusted that poor Loveday was also sleeping. The book he had been reading had possessed no interest for him.

His mind wandered from it and would not be arrested by its contents. He sat at the spinet and played on the keys, without sounding them, various airs that came into his memory and harmonised with the tenor of his imaginations. Then he sat in the window, and looked long into the silvery blue sky, at the one star. He did not look at his watch to note how the night passed, because he was not impatient. Paul was never so content as when alone, in a still house, communing with his thoughts.

After a while he stood up, went into the hall, unlocked the porch door, and took a turn up and down the avenue in the moonlight. He was stiff with sitting still, and felt a little chilled. The great oak gates of the lodge were never fastened. They had been barred every night in the Rover's days, never since. What had Paul to fear ?

He did not remain long in the avenue, as he was afraid of being away from his post for more than a few minutes. He returned to the parlour, without locking the hall door, and resumed his place at the window, looking up at the sky and the star.

How long he thus sat, lost in meditation, he did not know. He was roused from it as by an electric shock—he heard a movement in the room overhead. He started to his feet, for he heard a soft tread. He went to the parlour door and listened. The footfall was on the landing ; it was descending the stairs. Alarmed, uncertain what to do,

what ought to be done, Paul remained standing in the doorway, holding the latch with his left hand, watching.

Then he saw a white figure issue from the staircase doorway, and walk down the hall slowly. A couple of wax candles were burning in the room behind Paul, and their light shone along the floor and cast his shadow over it. The floor was of slate, but some mats were on it, and a strip of carpet between the porch entrance and the stair door.

There could be no doubt whatever as to who was walking through the hall; there could be no doubt as to her unconsciousness of what she was doing. Had she been awake or in her right mind, she would have seen the candle-light and the man standing watching her, and have shrunk away. She saw nothing; she was ashamed of nothing. She was in her long white dress, as she had lain in bed; she was possessed by one idea, even in her sleep. She held her hands folded one over the other, on her bosom. She looked neither to right nor to left, but walked on. She went direct to the porch doorway, released one hand from its hold on her breast, opened the closed door, and went out.

Then Paul recovered from his amazement. He knew that she was walking in her sleep. He caught from a hook in the hall a large dark cloak that his sister wore in wet weather, and hurried after Loveday. He would not wake her, and cover her with confusion, and fill her with terror. He threw the cloak over her shoulders, and she accepted it as a matter of course, and drew it with the disengaged hand together across her bosom and what she held so tightly and secretly there. She went through the outer court and under the gatehouse, and down the avenue; her eyes were wide and fixed before her. She did not turn her head; she did not feel the cold earth and stones under her bare feet. Paul followed her at a little distance. She passed out of the avenue into the lane, and descended the hill till she reached the little spring opposite the gate. There she stood still, and, letting go her hold on the mantle, put forth her right hand to the ash root she had held and leaned on in the evening light. Now the light struck through the gateway as then, but the light was now that of the moon—then, of the sun. Then it had turned all it

touched to gold—now, to silver; then the spring water fell in diamonds—now, in pearls. The lane was over-arched with trees, and was therefore in shadow, except at the well, where the gate and gap in the trees allowed the moonlight to flood the road and illumine the bank and falling water. The cloak slipped from Loveday's shoulders to her feet, and in the halo of white effulgence she stood, looking before her with motionless eyes at a frond of maidenhair fern that danced in the air and flashed into a cluster of silver flakes, and then sank back into invisibility. She put her fingers to her neck and drew the gold wedding ring from her bosom, and held it, suspended by its silk thread, spinning and twinkling in the moonlight. Never hasty, never rough, in anything she did, waking or sleeping, she unknotted the string—she did not break it.

Then she sighed, and holding it between her palms, and resting both, closed, on the ash root, she laid her brow on them, and so remained, still as a figure of marble, for full five minutes. Whilst Paul hesitated whether to step forwards and throw the cloak over her again, she raised her head, and, with a rapid motion, cast the ring from her into the spring.

Then she turned away, and began rapidly to retrace her steps. Paul followed, carrying the mantle, but afraid of touching her. She had done that which she had determined on, and was more likely now to be roused from sleep by a word or a touch. The highest mercy he could show her was to allow her to return to her room unroused.

She did not wake. She went back as she had come, and Paul, when he returned to the parlour, heard her throw herself on her bed. Then all was still.

Paul locked the hall door, and resumed his place at the window. He blew out the candles, and sat thinking till morning broke and the star had passed over the roof beyond his range.

CHAPTER XL.

THE WARP.

For many days Loveday was confined to her bed by nervous fever. She was unconscious, and rambled. But she never uttered one word about her marriage, or named Constantine. She spoke very little, and then concerning her brother, and little Ruth, and domestic arrangements at Nantsillan. The slab of slate weighed on her. What was she to do with it? How many years was she to carry it about with her? Was it always to be on her head, pressing her down?—because it hurt her; it was too heavy for her to bear. Would no one take the slab of slate off her head, or must she bear it till it crushed her into the earth? If so, would someone write on it 'Loveday,' and nothing more, and leave it as her tombstone? Then for hours she lay with her forefinger on her lips, checking herself lest she should say something that must not be said.

'I thought,' said Constantine, 'that you were about to get a companion for Juliot, to save her trouble, and you have given her an additional pack to carry. This comes of boasting, Featherstone. You told me you had secured a treasure. But I suppose you are content that this house should be a hospital.'

'You were nursed in it,' said Paul, with slight reproach in his tone.

'The best thing you can do is to send her about her business as soon as she is well. Juliot has enough to do with the baby, and ought not to be worried with nursing sick women.'

'We did not pack you away.'

'No; I was useful to you. Saved you the rides to Stanbury.'

'And this poor girl will be useful when she is well.'

'I suppose she will not be drawing her salary all the time she is being coddled up?' said Constantine.

Paul did not answer; he stood up, and walked away.

Constantine was in reality very anxious about the condition of Loveday. He stood in daily terror of her reveal-

ing the secret which would consign him to prison. He was not heartless, but he was rendered so for the time by his fear for himself; and, in his desire to screen himself from suspicion, he allowed Paul to regard him as lacking in common charity. His want of feeling, or apparent want of feeling, for the patient, angered Paul Featherstone, who could not forget that his brother-in-law had lain in the same condition, in the same room, less than two years ago, and owed his life to the attentions he and his sister had freely, ungrudgingly given him.

Paul Featherstone did not call in a medical man for Loveday. 'The mind is suffering,' he said, 'and reacts on the body. A surgeon can do nothing. The mind will recover itself presently, and then the body will cast off its fever. Too much wool has been worked over the woof, and the string is strained.'

He visited the sick room every day, and sat some time beside Loveday. Sometimes he stood over her. He never went to her without kneeling by her side and praying, or repeating the psalms of David. His presence always brought her relief. She did not recognise him when delirious, or speak to him; but she was cooler, calmer, after his visits. He laid his hand on her hot brow, and a stream of soothing influence passed from him to her; the flame in her cheek became less fierce, her restlessness abated.

'If she could cry, she would be better,' said Paul one day, when glimmering consciousness appeared in her eyes. 'Juliot, bring the baby. She seemed to love it. Try whether she will recognise the child. Perhaps the little finger may touch the rock of stone, and the rivers gush forth in dry places.'

Juliot went out, and returned with the little fellow in her arms, placed him on Loveday's bed, and said: 'My dear, I have brought you my baby, little Constantine. Kiss him.'

Then Loveday shuddered, and shrank away with a look of trouble and terror in her face; and as she crouched back against the wall, with her hands extended before her, to hold off the child from touching her, they saw that the experiment had failed. They had done harm, not good, by it. Paul was disappointed and puzzled. He said to Loveday: 'Give me your hand.'

She always obeyed him; she extended her hand to him, and he put his fingers on the pulse; the blood was leaping and hammering in her veins.

'Lie down,' he said.

She submitted.

'Shut your eyes.'

She closed the lids.

'Can you sleep?'

She shook her head slightly.

'I am your master; I order you to sleep. I am your physician; I prescribe sleep. I am your friend; I beseech sleep.'

She unclosed her eyes, looked at him with such anguish in them as to move him grievously. Then she closed her eyes again. He continued to hold her wrist till the pulse became more regular, and then he withdrew.

Next day she was better; the fire was gone from her cheeks. She was very pale, sunken-eyed, and thin, but the light of restored intelligence was in her eyes. She was very weak. A look of settled melancholy, almost of despair, was in her face.

Paul Featherstone again visited her, and this time signed to his sister to leave the room. He stood—he did not attempt to take a chair—he stood some little way from the bed. He had his hat in his hands; he held it with both in front of him. His back was towards the door and the light of the window, but the reflected light from the white walls and sheet partly illumined his grave, earnest face.

'Miss Penhalligan,' he said, in a low tone, 'I have not much to say to you to-day, and I will not intrude for more than a couple of minutes. I only dare to venture here as your doctor. I have had to deal in this room with two cases, of which yours is one. There has been unconsciousness and fever in both—in the first caused by outward physical wounds, in this by inward wounds dealt to the spirit. I do not know your story, but I know this, that you have had to suffer. The pain of a crushed soul has been yours, and that brought on your illness. The wounds are not healed, the cause of your sorrow not removed. I see in your face that the anguish remains, though the bodily fever is over. I know one thing more. As I told you that

the dominant of woman's life is self-sacrifice, so I doubt not that the beginning, the middle, and the ending of this passage of wild and troubled music has been on the dominant that rules true woman.' He paused. Her eyes were on his, full of entreaty not to ask anything—not to press her to yield up the secret. He quite understood her. 'I ask you nothing. I want to know nothing. That I am right in what I have said I know without asking. This I will assure you for your comfort: you never said a word, in your wildest paroxysms, which conveyed a hint of anything you may wish to keep from us.' He saw a look of relief creep into her eyes. 'But I have not come here to speak about this. I have come to remind you of something you yourself asked me. You said to me that life was an embroidery on canvas, and you accepted what I told you was the woof of woman's life. Have you forgotten what I said was the warp? The strings of that are fixed above—in heaven. Throw the rest of your threads about the warp, and the woof will not give way.' He was silent again for a moment. Then he went on: 'Do you know the constellation of Charles's Wain? It turns and turns for ever, but in all its turnings the two foremost stars ever point in one direction; therefore they are called the Pointers. In all the motions of the Wain they never turn a hairbreadth aside—they ever point to the Pole Star. There are many changes and revolutions in life, but each of us has his pointers—the head and the heart, and they will keep him steady if they point ever to the centre of the spiritual sphere.'

Then he bowed and left the room.

A moment after, she heard him at the spinet below, playing and singing:

> As pants the hart for cooling streams,
> When heated in the chase,
> So longs my soul for Thee, O God!
> And Thy refreshing grace.

Then the tears trickled from the eyes of Loveday and moistened her pillow.

CHAPTER XLI.

ANOTHER NOTICE TO QUIT.

CONSTANTINE was engaged all the time that Loveday was ill in forming plans of escape from the dangerous as well as embarrassing situation in which he was placed. None were satisfactory. All rested on the assumption that Loveday would be induced to abandon her rights. But could he hope this? Had he a right to expect it? She was his legitimate wife, and was it likely that she would waive her claim in favour of another woman? That she loved him dearly he knew; but was her love of so unselfish a nature as to induce her to renounce him? Was not love essentially selfish? He had wronged her in the most cruel manner in which wrong could have been done. Was it not probable that the injury done her would transform her love into hatred, and that she would seek revenge? How could she better chastise him for having deserted her for another than by proclaiming his infamy and exacting legal retribution?

But supposing that she consented not to betray him, would she be able to keep the secret? Would she not be moved, when next she was at Towan, to confide to his mother that he, her best-loved son, her Benjamin, the apple of her eye, was still alive? Would she be able to keep the secret from Gerans, his brother, who had always loved him with a strong, unselfish, fraternal love?

Would she be silent to her own brother, Dennis? If Dennis knew the truth, he would certainly demand redress for his sister's wrongs. He would not be satisfied that his sister should forfeit her position.

Loveday would be writing home, every one in his old parish, all his relations and friends would know where she was, and what more likely than that some one or other of them would drop in at Marsland to see her, for Loveday was an universal favourite. Then, if any one from the old place came to Marsland, the mischief would be done.

He trusted that Loveday had said nothing to com-

promise him during her delirium, or nothing that Paul Featherstone and Juliot had understood as compromising to him. If she had used his name in her murmurs, it was possible that the fond Juliot had supposed she was speaking of the child, and flattering herself that the sick girl had already become attached to it. A mother is sufficiently proud and foolish to believe anything, said Constantine.

He could not, however, conceal from himself that Paul did not regard him with the same friendliness as before, and this change in his manner filled him with uneasiness. Did Paul suspect anything? Had he an inkling of an idea that he and Loveday were not absolute strangers to each other? Had Paul noticed his alarm when the name of Penhalligan was mentioned to him? Had Juliot told Paul that it was at sight of him, Constantine, that Loveday had been overcome?

In his fear and desire to allay suspicion Constantine overdid his part. He spoke with heartlessness of the sick woman, and expressed impatience at her illness. This it was which alienated Paul from him. Featherstone suspected nothing, but he was shocked and disgusted at Constantine's lack of generosity, and dearth of sympathy.

Paul's manner became more restrained and cold towards him, and this, instead of inducing Constantine to alter his conduct, drove him to accentuate it.

Loveday had been thinking, quite as much as he, what was to be done. He had considered what was expedient, she what was right.

One day, when Paul was about the farm and Juliot was with the baby in the garden, Constantine took the occasion of being alone in the house with Loveday to talk to her about the future. She was sufficiently recovered to sit in the parlour. He had shunned a short private interview when left alone for a few minutes; it must be painful to both, and could lead to nothing. Now he had his chance, and he seized it.

She was looking deathly white, with bright sunken eyes; beautiful she always was, her intense sorrow had spiritualised her beauty, and Constantine thought her now more lovely than he had ever done before. He had never lost his affection for her, but his fear for himself had stifled it in his bosom when he saw her again.

She looked at him sadly, with a tinge of fear in her sadness.

'My dear Loveday,' he said, carefully shutting the door behind him. 'I am so glad to see you better, and trust you will soon be well. I have not had a chance before of speaking with you in private, and telling you how anxious I have been whilst you were ill. It has been doubly distressful to me, because I was forced to conceal my feelings.'

She did not interrupt him. She did not curl her lip and wonder whether his anxiety were for himself or for her.

'I have been thinking what is to be done, and I cannot tell. What have you thought?'

'You asked me to be silent till you had come to a resolution. I have kept my word. What do you propose?'

'My dear Loveday, you see the position I am in. It is desperate. I have schemed one thing, then another, and every scheme when built up seems reared on sand, which will shift and let it down.' He was afraid to propose to her any one of his schemes: they all rested on the one base of her self-abnegation, and he had not the heart—he had sufficient sense of shame not to ask that of her.

'Constantine,' she said, 'what do you offer me?'

'I have no offer to make.'

'And I am to be silent till you have made up your mind?'

'Yes, I entreat you. Some solution will present itself, must do so, but I have not found it yet.'

'Listen to me,' she said, calmly. 'I have had even more time than you for the consideration of this matter. You have had distractions, I have had none; waking, all day I have thought of nothing else; in my bed, unable to sleep, at night, I have had the problem ever before me. Even sleeping it has been present, embarrassing me. I have considered it from every possible point of view; I have disengaged my own interests from it, I have tried to see it, as I might have seen it had it pleased God to take me to Himself. That, perhaps, would have been the simplest way out of the maze, but that it was not to be *the* way God has shown by leaving me here. I was willing enough to go.

I clung to life, no, not by a finger end—but I have been sent back from the door of death with a command to stay. Therefore, Constantine, the puzzle must be riddled out between us.'

'What is to be done?' asked he, distractedly. 'I have tried to discover, and cannot.'

'Perhaps you have looked at it from one narrow point of sight—your interests, or your fancied interests. But we must consider it from another; we must ask, What is right to be done?'

Constantine's heart sank. He was not prepared to think of it thus. Thought of thus there was but one answer.

'You are my husband in the sight of God, and by the law of the land. I am your wife, and Juliot is not. You will allow this.'

'Yes'—reluctantly admitted. 'But, consider——'

'Let me say what I desire, and then you shall speak. The plain, broad right is that you and I live together henceforth as we have sworn to each other. Is it not so?'

He did not answer.

'But,' continued Loveday, 'that has been made impossible by your guilty act. It cannot be. It never can be. If your guilt is made known, you will be separated from me and from your other wife, equally. Is it not so?'

'Yes, it is; and surely, Loveday, if you have a heart——'

'Let me finish what I have to say. I have thought it all out. It is clear to me now, but I cannot say that it will remain so. I cannot live with you as your wife, and you cannot return to me as my husband, because of your crime. Not only because the law would banish you, but also because my whole nature recoils from it. But, as you are living now, you are in sin. Poor Juliot is guiltless, because she is ignorant; but you are not, and every day that you remain here aggravates your sin, and lessens your chance of pardon and salvation. Is it not so?'

He did not answer.

'Do not think for one moment that I regard Juliot with jealousy. I pity her. I love her. I cannot do other than both admire and love her for her singleness of mind and childlike innocence. She knows nothing of the battles

and agonies of life. She has lived here as a nun in a convent, secluded from the knowledge of evil. Not for the world would I have her faith in goodness shaken by the discovery of the wrong you have done her. I will never, never tell her. I will for ever seal my mouth lest she should know this terrible secret: I would spare her the shame which would crush and kill her; and for her brother's sake—so good, so kind, so pious, and so simple—I would be silent, if there were no other motive to influence me, but——'

Constantine had been breathing freer. At the 'but' he began to shiver with fear again.

'But,' she continued, 'though she must not know the cruelty and feel the disgrace, you must not remain here as her husband. That would be sin. You must go hence.'

'What!' exclaimed Constantine, angrily; 'you would banish me!'

'Not I. You must exile yourself. I will do nothing, I can do nothing, but tell you your duty. Not to come to me—I do not ask, I do not wish that. It will be a pang to Juliot, but an innocent pang—not a degrading torture, like the knowledge of your iniquity. Am I not right?'

'And pray, whither am I to go?'

'That I leave to you.'

'You will swear to me most solemnly not to reveal our marriage to Juliot, to Paul, to anyone?'

'I have shown that I can keep silence, and I will keep it. But understand that your father and mother, Gerans, and Rose all know about that. I am now in banishment myself from Nantsillan, for a twelvemonth. At the end of this time I return, and the old Squire will probably recognise my relationship. I will say nothing about you; I will not allow them to suppose, from anything I may say, that you are still alive. Accident, or rather Providence, has brought me here, to startle you out of your security and tell you your duty. If you neglect to attend to me, Providence may again interfere, not to warn, but to punish.'

'A veiled threat,' muttered Constantine.

'Not at all. Not through me shall you ever suffer.'

He considered. What she said was true; there was always a danger of his being discovered. There were plenty of persons in his own county who knew him; he

was known by some in Exeter. He was shut up in a little corner of land—there was danger in leaving it; he must be for ever in fear of its invasion, and of his recognition. If his previous marriage was known to his father and mother, to Gerans and Rose, it would soon be known to all who cared, and his recognition would lead to his destruction.

'Loveday,' he said, 'you have put this in a new light to me. I admit to you that my conscience has been very uneasy. I have not been happy. I did what was wrong, and then did not know how to undo the wrong. You must give me time to think well over what you have put to me so clearly. And now, as you have pronounced sentence of banishment against me, I must deliver the same to you. You cannot stay here.'

'No,' she answered quietly, 'I do not wish to. Here is a letter I have written to-day to my cousin in Exeter, to ask her to receive me. I was to have gone to her when diverted at Launceston.'

'No one at home knows where you are at present?'

'How can they? I have not written. I have been too ill to write, even if the wish had been in me.'

'I will see to this letter being posted.'

'When I hear from her I will leave. I will leave gladly. To be here is daily suffering. I had written to my cousin from Nantsillan to expect me, but did not wait for an answer; she will have wondered what became of me when I did not arrive.'

'Do not condemn me, Loveday. I have, I have indeed, suffered.'

'I know that you have done very wrong, but I do not condemn you. No one has any right to judge another who has not been subjected to the same temptation.'

'And you will forgive me?'

'I will forgive you freely, heartily, when I am sure that you are repentant.'

'I am that now.'

'When you have left this place I will forgive you.'

Then they heard the voice of Juliot, talking to her baby, as she entered the house from the garden.

Constantine at once left the parlour.

'You have been in to see our patient,' said Juliot. 'She is, indeed, *patient*, which is a joke, as Paul would say.

By the way, have you observed, John, how much graver my brother has become of late? He was wont to be vastly humorous, but now he never jokes. What has come over him, I wonder?'

CHAPTER XLII.

ON A BENCH.

The departure of Loveday from Marsland was not so easily managed as Constantine supposed. Days passed without an answer from the Exeter cousin, and at last Loveday's letter was returned from the Dead Letter Office: 'Left Exeter; address not known.'

Loveday was troubled. What should she do? Whither could she go? She must consult Constantine. There was no one else whom she could consult. She was uneasy, anxious to leave, partly because her brother and friends at Towan knew nothing about her—where she was, what she was doing—and also because a continued residence at Marsland was unendurable to her.

She had seen little of Constantine since the interview in the parlour. He had, or pretended to have, business at Stanbury, which occupied him so continuously that he slept there, coming to Marsland only now and then.

One beautiful day the opportunity she desired arrived. She was in the garden, sitting on the bench, holding the baby on her lap, talking and singing to it. She was much improved in health, but still looked delicate, and the expression of intense sadness would not wear out of her face, but it was qualified and sweetened by resignation. She had no hope in life, no object towards which she could strive. Sometimes, when she was in the garden with the child, Paul was also there, working, or collecting herbs, and he would talk to her. His conversation always brought her comfort. Without knowing her secret he divined the depth of her trouble, and sympathised with her.

Paul's conversation acted on her hot and suffering heart like the flow over it of cool spring-water.

The child exercised a healing influence also. It drew her attention from herself. She became very fond of it,

and it was a pleasure to her to be able to carry it about and amuse it whilst the mother was engaged on her duties in the house. When Loveday was not nursing little Con she was engaged on needlework, repairs which had been neglected after the birth of the child, because Juliot had not time to attend to both.

She had made a little posy of bachelor's-buttons for the baby when the garden door opened, and Constantine came to her. He looked sharply about, to make sure that Paul Featherstone was not there, and then he seated himself on the bench beside Loveday. At the back grew an elder, now a mass of sweetness and white bloom.

'I am glad to find you alone,' said Constantine. 'Why are you still here?'

She told him the reason. He was perplexed, and bit his thumb.

'I thought your cousin was living beyond her income. How is it you did not know this before leaving Nantsillan?'

'I wrote, but left before the return of the letter. It will have arrived, and alarmed my brother: he will not know where I am.'

'There is no help for it,' said Constantine. 'You must remain here a little longer, till something is heard of. I will put an advertisement for you in an Exeter paper. Tell me, have Paul Featherstone and Juliot questioned you regarding the cause of your illness?'

'Oh, Constantine! no. They have vastly too good feeling to do such a thing. But Mr. Featherstone is so wonderful that I fancy at times he sees into my soul and reads what is there. I am sure he knows more than his sister.'

'Does he suspect me?'

'I do not think so. I cannot tell what he knows, but I believe, from the way he has with me, that he has more knowledge than we suppose. He has great and miraculous powers.'

'Pshaw!' scoffed Constantine. 'Do not be imposed on by his airs. He fancies that he has the gift of healing, but he is a quack and a mountebank.'

'You must not say that,' exclaimed Loveday, with some warmth. 'He is true to himself and to others.'

Constantine laughed. 'He imposes first on himself and then upon others. I thought you had more common sense

than to be deceived by his pretensions. I'll tell you what happened whilst I have been here. I went with Paul one Sunday to Welcombe Church, and found it crowded with an unusually large congregation. All through the service it was clear the people were thinking of something other than the prayers and sermon. When the parson retired, then the churchwardens came up to the Featherstone pew, and asked Paul to accompany them. So he went out, and all the people lined the churchyard path, apparently expecting something. They closed in after Paul and the churchwardens, and followed them to the church-house. "Us have got him at last," said one of the wardens. "The old enemy be safe locked up in here," said the other. "What do you mean?" asked Paul, much puzzled. "Sure, Squire, us have caught the devil, and locked him in. Nicolas Heyward, there, found him in the road." We entered, and there lay a black indiarubber ball on the floor. "Nicolas Heyward took'n up off the road, not knowing what he was," said one of the wardens; "and when he let'n fall, then he jumped and danced so high he was sure that he'd laid hold on him then. So he said the Church Catechism right through, questions and all, and, thus fortified, he sent him on wi' his foot, till he got him into the church-house, and there he be." "Why," said Paul, "this is quite natural; it is not Satan, it is an indiarubber bouncing ball." Then he took it up and went out before all the congregation, and tried to explain its properties. Then he threw it down, and away it sprang over their heads, and the folk flew right and left; and where the ball fell no one ever saw. But all Welcombe parish believes that Squire Featherstone conjured the devil away.'[1]

'Mr. Featherstone did not encourage their superstition; he endeavoured to dispel it.'

'He could do no other, with me at his elbow. If I had not been present, there is no knowing to what hocus-pocus he might have had resort.'

'For shame, Constantine!'

'Well,' said he, with a laugh and shrug of his shoulders, 'it is an instance of the way in which the people encourage him in his craze; and he does nothing, as you have seen,

[1] A true incident that occurred about forty years ago. The thing found was, however, not a ball, but a gutta-percha whip.

to discourage them in their belief. Here, Loveday, give me the baby.'

He took the child in his arms and played with it. The little fellow laughed, and beat with his feet on his father's knees, and tried to stand and leap on them. Loveday had stuck little tufts of golden bachelor's-buttons down the front of his dress, and as Constantine danced him they fell out on his lap, and then on the ground about his feet, where he carelessly trod on them.

'He is like me, is he not, Loveday?' asked he.

'Yes, despotic as a Gaverock,' she replied.

'Tell me about home,' said Constantine. 'I have heard nothing since I left, and I cannot make inquiries. I have not had the chance of asking you. Is the old place just the same—and the old people, how are they?'

She told him about them. He was interested and moved by recollections, and sighed.

'It is very hard! You cannot understand my feelings. I wish again and again that I could go home and see them all. Now that I may not, I feel an almost uncontrollable desire to go. My father was rough, but, after all, Gerans and I had a very happy boyhood. How is Phœbus?'

'Phœbus belongs now to Rose.'

'She will not know how to manage him. I should like to slip back to Towan, by night, open the stable door, and gallop away on Phœbus. But it would not do; it cannot be. O Loveday! I have imprisoned myself here. I dare not go anywhere, lest I should be stumbled upon and recognised by some one from our parts. I have come to hate this nook of the world. Look at those bachelor's-buttons—how scraggy they grow! Do you remember the plant in the Towan garden under the drawing-room window? I nearly committed myself one day when I was here with Juliot. She spoke of this very tuft, and said that she was fond of the golden flower. Then I laughed, and said I knew far finer shrubs of bachelor's-buttons. "You should see ours," I began; then recollected myself, and turned the colour of a peony.'

Loveday sighed.

'Look at this little fellow,' said Constantine. 'There is not a scrap of Featherstone in him, I am glad to say; he has my nose, and my hair, and his eyes will, I think, be

like mine—only one cannot tell of what colour a baby's eyes are. Loveday, was my father very angry when he heard about our marriage?'

'At first, but he soon cooled.'

'Ah! now that it is too late, I wish I had been brave and told him all. One is always wise after the event, when it is irrevocable. I hate my life here, with this weariful Paul Featherstone, solemn and dreamy, and in this cramped nook from which I can no more escape than a mouse from a trap. How is Bryony?'

'What, the black cow?'

'Yes. I remember her when she was a little calf. I was wont to give her sugar, and she was tame as a kitten, and ran after me and licked my hand. Whenever I came home from Padstow she ambled and jumped for joy. She had not forgotten me on my return from Exeter. I went through the yard when the cows were being brought in to be milked, and she broke away from the rest, and lowed, and rubbed her head against me, and licked my hand.'

'I heard Mrs. Gaverock say that Bryony gave more milk than two of the red Devons.'

'I care for nothing here, and for nobody——'

'Nobody!' exclaimed Loveday, looking round. 'Not this little fellow?'

'Oh, of course, I exclude him. If I ran away I should carry him with me. You must not condemn me for what I have done. All men make mistakes some time or other, only most are able to redress them somehow, and I cannot —that is the difference.' Then he handed the baby back to Loveday. He was tired of holding it, and of its jumps and pats on his cheeks. 'The little fellow goes to you quite readily, as if——' He checked himself. A constrained pause ensued. 'Were they very distressed at Towan when they thought I was dead?' he asked.

'It nigh on broke your dear mother's heart. She has never recovered the shock. She was off her head for a while, thinking of you as a child.'

'Ah! so was I off my head. If I had not been so, I would not have got into this cursed predicament. So Gerans is married, and has got Rose. Some fellows are born to luck. Why, she must be worth four or five hundred

a year, and charming to boot. Gerans is a good fellow, but that is no reason why the skies should rain gold on him and pitch on me. I could be quite as good a fellow as he if circumstances allowed me. The saying is, "A poet is born, not made;" it is the reverse with a virtuous man —he is made, not born. How can a man be righteous when he is impecunious? A man must live. When you are drowning you catch at what you can to keep you afloat, and don't ask if the casks have paid the excise on which you are washed ashore. Was the "Mermaid" badly hurt?'

Loveday was made uncomfortable by his conversation. She did not see his meanness, selfishness, and want of balance, but his talk fretted her wounded and suffering heart, she hardly knew why.

'Constantine,' she said, 'never mind about the "Mermaid." We have other matters that concern us more nearly. I think day and night about them, and it seems to me that there is no escape from the consequences this side the grave. We must do our duty, each going the straight road that opens before us, and spare others as much as we can.'

'Be easy,' he answered, with a tone of impatience; "I shall find a way out. A rabbit has more holes than one to his burrow. There is no knot that cannot be untied with patience.'

Loveday shook her head sadly. 'We are all enveloped in one cloud,' she said, 'and the cloud is so charged with lightning that some must be struck, and none can escape unsinged. You are bound to both Juliot and me—to both by the most sacred vows. My claim is the elder, and is the claim that the law would allow. Nevertheless, you are bound to her; you made promises to her, and she put her life in your hands, trusting to them. You are bound to her by this mutual bond.' She bent over the child, which was falling asleep, and her tears dropped on its sweet, innocent face. 'The child itself has a strong claim on you by nature, though not by law. Why do you speak so lightly of rabbit holes, and taking your choice out of which you will run? You can leave neither Juliot nor me without breaking a tie one end of which is attached to your heart. You cannot leave either Juliot or me without giving one of us inexpressible pain. You have broken

your mother's heart, you have broken mine, and—it is inevitable—you must break Juliot's. Yes, the saying is true: "The earth is strewn with potsherds"—the broken lives of us frail vessels of clay.'

'I suppose I shall have to leave Marsland,' said Constantine. 'I shall not be sorry. I am weary of my imprisonment here. I did what was wrong, and I repent. My conscience will not be easy till I have escaped from this false position. But whither am I to go? I have no money. I cannot return to Nankivel at Exeter or to Towan without giving some account of myself, and I am a bad hand at inventing lies. I have told enough since I came here, and every one of them has cut my throat as it came up.'

'Nevertheless, that is your best course. Return to your father, but tell no lies. Decline to say where you have been.'

'Yes! and then there will be hue-and-cry through the country after me. Paul will advertise me—full description given, and full account of how I was found. Then, what will happen? Judge for yourself. No, Loveday, that will not answer.'

'You are bound to go,' said Loveday. 'That is a clear duty.'

'And safer for me,' added Constantine.

'But,' she went on, 'do not go yet. I must leave; I cannot remain under the same roof with you and Juliot. I cannot visit my cousin, as I do not know where she is. You must bestir yourself to find some situation for me; otherwise I shall leave without knowing whither I am going. My position here is insupportable.'

Just then Juliot came into the garden, and seeing the two together on the bench talking, she clapped her hands, and called over her shoulder to her brother:

'Paul! Paul! come here. I am so glad! John is reconciled at last to Loveday.'

'I am rejoiced that his eyes are opened to acknowledge worth where it is found,' said Paul, entering.

'Do you know, Loveday,' explained Juliot, 'that Mr. Rock was quite prejudiced against you? He did not know you, and I think he was afraid that you would steal away baby's heart from me. Now that you have had a talk to-

gether you will have come to like each other—I am so delighted!'

'Dinner is ready,' Juliot said, when Constantine stood up, greatly confused.

Then all went together into the hall. Constantine had not dined with Loveday since her recovery; he had kept away at Stanbury. Now, as he sat at table, he looked from her to Juliot, and from Juliot back to Loveday. There could be little question which was the most attractive of the two women to whom he was bound. Juliot had the simplicity of a child in her face; that of Loveday was full of intelligence, and the sweetness bred of pain. They were both pleasant looking, but Loveday was the most beautiful.

'After all,' said Constantine to himself, 'I do love my first wife, and I do not care particularly for the second. Confound that fool, Paul, for throwing his sister at my head!'

CHAPTER XLIII.

BETWEEN TWO HEAVENS.

'I HAVE a plan, a beautiful plan,' said Juliot, when the early dinner was ended. 'The day is so perfect, the wind is off shore, and the sea is so still, that I have set my mind on Loveday having a paddle on the water. What do you say, Paul? Will you take the oars? From you, Loveday, I will allow no refusal. The air on the sea, the sun, the sparkling water, will do you much good, and bring colour to your pale cheeks.'

'Which boat shall we take? asked Paul. 'I suppose Rock will take an oar as well.'

'Oh, no!' exclaimed Juliot, eagerly, 'John is not going, nor am I. That is, we will stroll with you as far as the beach, but I shall have baby in my arms, and I am not going to sea with him. You will probably stay out longer than the young gentleman will approve, so I retain John to assist me in carrying him home. If he is amiable, we will await you on the sand and let the fine fellow play with the shingle; if he be overcome with *ennui*, John and I will transport him home.'

'I think it would do the child good to be rowed about in the bay,' said Constantine.

'My dear John, you must leave me to decide what is good for my boy. When he is six months or a year older I will not object. The air would be too strong for his lungs now, or his lungs might be too strong for those in the boat. He is capricious, and when he wills spoils the best sport.'

'As you choose,' said Constantine.

Paul Featherstone was well content to meet his sister's wishes. Loveday was grateful for the thought and kindness; Constantine alone appeared dissatisfied with the proposal, though he did not actively oppose it. The four, Juliot carrying the baby, descended the valley towards the shore of Marsland Mouth.

'Do not wait for us,' said Juliot. 'Push on, Paul, with Miss Penhalligan, and seize the day in its splendour. My fine gentleman detains me; he wishes to touch everything he sees, and what he touches he puts into his mouth. He is an experimental philosopher. Well, sir, what is your opinion of dandelion? Will it serve as a pickle? The flies are tiresome, are they, Constantine the little? John, dear, fetch me some large bracken leaves, that I may arrange them about his hat to drive away the tormentors. There, sir, is King Charles's oak in the bracken stalk, where your father has cut athwart. It does not interest you now. Wait a few years, and then you will be hunting for the meanings of the cabalistic characters in the fern-stalk yourself.'

Constantine assisted Paul in running the boat to the water; then Loveday was handed in. Featherstone removed his coat, and took an oar. 'You will not take the other?' asked he of Constantine.

'No, Paul,' said Juliot, 'John remains with me.'

'I don't know that,' said Constantine, perversely. 'Hold hard, Featherstone, I will join you.'

But Paul thrust off from land, and left his brother-in-law on the beach, with a moody brow and a dissatisfied grumble.

'Come to me, John,' said Juliot. 'Do you not see? You men are so dull: I do not want a third to spoil that little water-party.'

'Why should I spoil it?' he asked, impatiently.

'Oh, John! you think me simple, but I am shrewder in some matters than you.'

Her words, instead of allaying, aggravated his discontent. He paced the sands, and looked after the receding boat with an angry scowl.

'John, what is the matter?'

'I ought to have been at Stanbury to-day, not fooling here.'

Paul rowed Loveday well out from shore. The sky was perfectly serene, and as the wind was from the east and blew over the cliffs the sea was unruffled for some way out; indeed, in the bay, it was quite still. The beauty of colour in the water was indescribable. The sea on the north-west coast is so deep, the rocks rising precipitously out of many fathoms of water, that it is wholly void of earthy particles, and is transparent almost as an atmosphere and blue as the sky overhead.

The sea, though it did not form waves, and to the eye was still, yet heaved with the swell from the ocean; but the effect was soothing—it was as though the sea were breathing in sweet sleep under the rays of the summer sun.

That the sea was not altogether still was also evident from the line of white about the rocks, a precipitous cliff that formed the horn of the bay dividing it from Welcombe Mouth. The surf was, however, nothing to-day compared to what it usually was over and about the slate rocks there. Loveday looked up at the sky, and then down into the sea. It seemed as though the boat were hanging between two equally deep, blue, and tranquil heavens.

'You are almost disposed to doubt which is the real heaven,' said Paul; 'many look for it below, instead of above, yet there is one beneath as well as one above—bright, beautiful, peaceful, so long as it reflects the upper heaven. Shall I tell you what is the occasion of breaker and foam and wreck and ruin? It is the setting of the wind inland, instead of off the shore. Which is an allegory.' Then he pulled more vigorously, and shot round a rock beyond sight of those on the beach. The gulls were fluttering around, flashing like snow-flakes. Loveday put her fingers over the side, and let the clear water flow between

them. As the boat moved a soft air fanned her face, but failed when Paul suddenly shipped his oars and allowed the boat to float and heave on the sea as it listed.

Then he put his hand in his waistcoat pocket and drew forth a piece of silver paper, which he unfolded, and from it took a gold ring attached to a thread of blue silk, and handed it in his palm to Loveday.

'Madam,' said he, 'I return you what was yours, found by me under circumstances I need not detail. That it is connected with your trouble, I am well assured. Of your secret grief I know nothing, and I desire to know no more than you choose to tell. But, madam, I am moved to ask you to confide somewhat in me. You are alone, and without a counsellor; I might help you, and I trust I could tender you consolation also.'

He had found the ring suspended by its silken thread to a frond of maidenhair fern beside the spring in the lane. Loveday had, indeed, missed it, and been uneasy at its loss, and quite unconscious that she had cast it from her in a sleep-walk.

The faint colour that had come into her cheeks fanned by the sea air died away, and a cloud came over her eyes. She trembled when she took the ring from his hand; she said nothing for some minutes, but her bosom heaved, not with the even swell of the sea at that moment, but as it heaves at the coming on of a storm. Presently she raised her eyes to the face of Paul Featherstone, and said in a low, but distinct voice: 'It belongs to me. You have a right to know more. I have been married, and have lost my husband.'

'Lost——'

'Lost at sea.'

'Your happiness was of short duration?'

'My happiness!'

She said no more, but her tone told him how very short, how very slight, the happiness had been.

He put the oars into the water again, and rowed on, outward, to where the wind coming over the cliffs touched and roughened the surface—but the touch was light and the roughness little. Holding the oars in the water, or raising them and letting the clear drops run off the blades, using no exertion, but seeing that the tide did not carry

the boat further, Paul paused, and looking gravely at Loveday he said, 'You have no home, no one to care for you, to protect you from trouble, to shield you from harm; no one to whom to confide your sorrows, and from whom to accept consolation. From the moment that I found your ring, I suspected your story, and——' He hesitated, drew a long breath, and said, 'I have desired an opportunity of asking you to accept from me that of which you are bereaved.'

Loveday looked at him at first with uneasiness, then with alarm.

'The time must come, and come quickly, when my brother-in-law will leave Marsland, and take up his residence at Stanbury with his wife and child. Stanbury is theirs, and, somehow, Mr. Rock and I do not agree together quite as well as I should wish. I have nothing to say against him, but our opinions and feelings are not harmonious, and it is best that he should go to his own house, where he is master. And now, madam, I venture very humbly, and knowing my own deficiencies and your transcendent excellence, to entreat you——'

'Oh, stay, stay!' exclaimed Loveday, in tones of distress. She clasped her hands, and entreated, 'Oh, Mr. Featherstone, I beseech you, say no more!'

He obeyed, he rode harder, turned the head of the boat landwards, and was silent. Loveday sat speechless, with her hands pressed to her bosom. The cup of bitterness that had been given her was not drained to the dregs. She must be a cause of disappointment and grief to the good, courteous, and kind man who had led hitherto a life free from heart-ache.

After a long silence he said, whilst still rowing:

'I must not allow this interview to pass without making myself clearly understood, without assuring myself that you do not mistake my meaning. I look on you with such respect, such tender regard, that I should be most happy to place my life, my fortune, my name at your feet.'

'It cannot be,' answered Loveday, profoundly agitated, gasping for breath.

'Tell me this,' he said, 'you do not love another?'

'No,' she replied, after a moment's thought; 'I think of none but the husband I have lost.'

'But he is lost!' exclaimed Paul.

Loveday covered her eyes, and bowed her face on her knees.

The sun was declining now, and its rays gilt the cliffs; the boat was out of the rougher water, under the lee of the coast again. The gulls were screaming and chattering, boldly diving near the boat, and coming up with fish, and dashing on to wing again with a splash of water.

'Madam,' said Paul Featherstone, 'why can you not be happy at Marsland? A quiet corner of a quiet world, where there is nothing to distress from without or from within—almost too quiet for our good, maybe—perhaps too still to last without a ruffle. My sister loves you, and would gladly receive you. Of myself I will say nothing, save this, that the whole desire of my life would be to make you happy.'

'You are so good, so generous,' said Loveday, 'that it goes to my heart to refuse you, but—I cannot, I cannot.'

'Regard for the dead,' continued Paul, 'is just and good; but do not let the dead stand between you and happiness. The dead do not return from the deep of the sea to cut you off from home and rest and love. They do not haunt us, after they are dead, to forbid us forming new friendships and relationships. By all means be faithful to the memory of him you have lost, but, believe me, he in Paradise will rejoice, if he ever loved you, to see that his poor storm-beaten dove is offered a sheltering cot.'

She could not speak, the power to answer was gone from her, so great was her despair.

'I am in no hurry,' Paul went on. 'I will wait for you patiently two or three years, till your fresh grief has abated. If I trouble you now, it is only because I am eager to save you from fresh trials.'

'Oh, how good, how kind to me!' said Loveday. 'And I seem so ungrateful! Oh, Mr. Featherstone, believe me, there is no man on earth, whom I respect as I respect you. There is no man on earth from whom I could obtain better guidance, more strength, holier comfort. Be my friend, my guide—if I may ask this; but ask for nothing further. It cannot be. Indeed, indeed.' She fell on her knees in the boat, and put her hands to her brow. 'I cannot explain myself. I shall go mad. It cannot be.'

'Madam,' said Paul, 'I fear I have been too hasty.

Your sorrow is too recent. I can wait. I apologise for having spoken; I will transgress no more. Have no fear. Endeavour to forget the rash words that I have addressed to you. It grieves me to the heart that I have troubled you. You have asked me to be your friend; I am content to stand in that capacity to you. Consider me for ever after as your friend, who has your interests and welfare near his heart; I am honoured beyond my deserts to be so regarded. I was premature in speaking, because I thought that the time would shortly come when Mr. Rock and I would part—he to go to Stanbury, I to remain here. But I will master my repugnance—that is, I mean I will think the best I can of him, excuse him as far as I can, and bear with what it costs me a struggle to endure, for your sake. I am sorry to speak thus of my own brother-in-law, but I cannot avoid it. I am disappointed; he is hardly what I supposed him to be. But there, I will say no more on this topic, which is painful to me, and only touched on to explain my temerity in addressing you as I have to-day. Madam, we are at the shore. Allow me to offer you my hand to disembark. On some future occasion, it may be far away, I shall dare to offer it you again—then to embark on a cruise as still and untossed as that to-day, to float with me between two heavens.'

She made no answer, but stepped ashore. He drew the boat up and secured it; then offered her his arm, but she declined it. Constantine and Juliot were no longer on the beach; the evening was settling down, and the dew falling, so the mother had carried baby home. As Loveday walked without speaking at Paul's side, he also was silent. She thought of his words, 'floating between two heavens.' She had been cast out of the rest and serenity of one, and a second had been opened and offered to her that day, into which she could not enter. Peace, happiness, security, love, were no more for her; she could no more recover the heaven she had lost, nor reach another. She still loved Constantine, but she had lost respect for him. Even if she were to condone the past, a home with him would never be a happy home; the recollection of his treachery, his desertion, must penetrate and poison it. The iron had entered into her soul, and could never be extracted; and the wound could not be salved over by his hand.

Paul regretted his precipitation, but did not lose hope Surely, in time, the living would take the place of the dead in her thoughts. He resolved to behave towards her as he had done hitherto—in no way to force his attentions upon her, to embarrass and pain her.

She was tired ascending the hill, which was very steep, and Paul cut her a stout ash staff, on which to lean, as she declined his arm.

At last they reached the house. At the entrance of the first court under the gatehouse Paul said, in a low tone:

'One final word, and I will trouble you no more with my attentions. Have you noticed the scroll that adorns the old sun-dial in the garden? Upon it stands the legend, "I wait upon the sun." I am like that dial. I will not be dispirited by rejection, by cloud, by wintry shadow. I will live in hope, and will wait upon the sun.'

CHAPTER XLIV.

FLED.

THE proposal of Paul Featherstone had greatly increased Loveday's uneasiness. She could not remain longer at Marsland, placed between a husband who did not acknowledge her, and was married to another, and an honourable, sincere man who sought her as his wife. If her position was intolerable before, it was made more so by the event of that day. She could not, she must not, remain. She had, indeed, accepted Constantine's undertaking to find her a place, but some time must elapse before the place was found, and Constantine was not a man of energy to bestir himself.

She was impatient, moreover, to communicate with her brother and with her friends at Towan, and relieve them from the suspense in which she was aware they must be, not knowing what had become of her. She was not angry with Constantine—she was disappointed with him, and her faith in him was more completely wrecked than her faith in Dennis. She was not jealous of Juliot—she loved and pitied her. For Paul she felt great regard, and some awe. She could not remain at Marsland, because the conflicting

feelings constantly roused in her bosom were more than the could bear. The strain was never off her. She was conscious of a craving in her soul for rest, a longing to be away, where she should no longer see her husband, her rival, the child that was his but not hers, the man who sought of her what she could not give him. There was not one of the household that did not cause her a pang. Hitherto, Paul, and he alone, had been a comfort to her. In his society and conversation she could, in a measure, escape from her cares. It was so now no longer. His company would embarrass her; he would be another to fill her with nervous alarm.

That night, when she retired to her room, she considered what was to be done. She was without one person to whom she could apply for advice. She was forced to be everything to herself. More strength was required of her than she was endowed with—strength of will, strength of judgment, strength of nerve, physical power.

How long would it be before Constantine advertised? He had asked no particulars as to what sort of a situation she needed; he had offered to advertise in his careless, inconsiderate manner, and days might elapse before he fulfilled his undertaking; and, after that, more time must pass before answers arrived, and more still before final arrangements were come to. Thus weeks might drag out before she got away. She had not the courage to contemplate this. She might recover her health if away from the sights and voices that troubled her, but a few more days among them would cast her back on the bed of sickness. She *must* get away. Her soul hungered, ached, strained for escape.

What excuse could she offer for leaving? She had been treated with exceptional kindness. To leave would savour of ingratitude. Yet Paul's offer furnished the excuse. She might make it her plea that she could no longer with delicacy remain in the house of the man whom she had refused. He would understand this, and explain her conduct to Juliot. This consideration decided her. She would leave at once. Instead of going to bed, she remained up all night packing her box, reserving from it only those few things which she would need at once, and which she could carry in her reticule. Then, in the

early hours of the morning, she stole downstairs, unfastened the hall door, and left Marsland. She took with her the staff Paul had cut the evening before and placed in her hand. That was the only thing she carried from Marsland with her, except her painful secret.

The morning air was fresh; the birds were singing already, although the sun was not yet risen. There was light in the sky, as there always is at midsummer, and the light was growing, for in another hour the sun would rise. Away in the north-west the Lundy lighthouse was winking; aloft was one star, fading. She hurried away from the house with beating heart, for as she passed out of the porch she heard the plaintive wail of the baby. It was cutting teeth, and fretful in the night, waking with a start, in a terror, and crying out and sobbing. Juliot also was awake, sitting up in her bed, and soothing the infant, speaking caressingly to it, kissing its little hands and fiery cheek.

Paul's dog came to her bounding, fawning, and asking to be patted, addressed, and taken a walk. Loveday had some difficulty in persuading him not to attend her.

She left the court and the avenue, and descended the hill to the spring. The water was dark now; neither diamonds nor pearls fell over the rock, and the maidenhair fern leaf was not visible in the gloom of the hedge. Loveday stood one moment by the spring, holding the ash root, recalling that first terrible interview; then she put her hands to the water and caught it in her palms, and drank. The freshness of the air and of the fountain invigorated her, and she pushed on.

Of the country she knew nothing. She had but a vague recollection of the way by which she had come from Stratton. She remembered a high road, and then lanes—intricate, winding, innumerable. But she had a general idea as to the direction she must take. She had resolved to go to Stratton, and thence make her way by coach to Launceston, where she would remain till she had decided on her future course. She must keep the sea on her right hand—that she knew. In course of time she must reach Stratton or Bude Haven. Bude was only three miles from Stratton. Should she reach Bude first, she must strike inland for the town of Stratton. That formed the

substance of what she knew. Unfortunately, she was ignorant of the structure (orography, we should call it now, but the word was unknown then) of the land; and, consequently, instead of striking inland, due east, till she hit the high road on the backbone of the moor, she hugged the coast, and lost herself among winding lanes, among hills and valleys, which only a goat could scramble up directly; where the lanes zigzagged, and dodged, and shifted direction at every bowshot she went. The hills, even when ascended at a slant, are mere scrambles, most exhausting to a strong man, and Loveday was worn with sickness and without food. She came upon neither farmhouse nor village inn. The sun rose, and struck on her back with scorching heat as she toiled up the hills. She stood still, and wiped the perspiration from her brow, whilst she leaned on Paul's stick. She was sick and faint with hunger. From weakness, the tears came into her eyes and mingled with the drops that fell from her forehead. When she had a steep hill to descend, her feet failed her. She leaned heavily on the staff, and her ankles turned; she had not the strength to stay herself from falling; and when she stood still, her limbs quivered with convulsive muscular trembling—the fruit of over-exertion. If she could have found a farm she would have asked for bread and a cup of milk, if she had lighted on an inn she would have ordered a meal; but she was out of the region of houses, passing now over gorse-strewn moors, then through oak coppice. The wild strawberries were ripe, but too small to satisfy her. On reaching the bottom of a glen, overcome by weariness, she crept into a little wood of dwarf oak, laid herself down in the bracken under the shade, and, before she was aware that she was sleepy, sank into unconsciousness.

Whilst she lay thus hidden, slumbering from exhaustion of mind and body, the day changed. The burning rays of the sun had been those which precede a storm. Clouds rose, covered the sky, and cut off the heat and light of the sun. A cold wind wailed through the valley, and whistled among the oak leaves of the coppice. Loveday slept on. Her tiredness after the sleepless night, and the weariness of her walk, and the exhaustion consequent on want of food, had cast her into a paralysing slumber, in which she neither heard nor felt—did not even dream. She did not wake till

the storm burst; then she was cold, shivering, and bewildered. She came forth from the dripping wood to see scuds of rain drive by, filling the valley with flying drifts that concealed every object. The lightning flashed, and the thunder boomed, but not very near; and the lightning, though vivid, was not forked and distinct. The wind roared up the valley, and on its breath carried the growl of the angry sea which it was lashing into fury. Uncertain where she was, and in what direction she had to go, Loveday ascended the hill she had last come down and emerged on a moor, where she lost her way, and found herself near the ragged edge of a cliff that projected into space illimitable, like the last hour of life. In her alarm she took the opposite direction, but could make out no road. Tracks there were, trodden by cattle, that led nowhere. The valleys below were filled with eddying vapour and driving rain. She was drenched. The water ran up her sleeve from the staff she held. The wind caught her ribbons and made of them instruments of shrill screaming music. The water came as in sheets from her brow over her eyes, blinding her, and the moisture soaked her bosom. Her skirts clung to her limbs as though they had been dipped in a river.

She seated herself under a ragged scrap of hedge, made of stones and clay, that the cattle had scrambled over and trodden down till it resembled the jaw of an old woman with a few fangs standing up. Under one of these she crouched, with a thorn-bush stretching above her landwards like a streamer. The wind howled and screeched through the twigs, and curled round the corners and lashed at her wet skirts, and beat her in the face with splashes of sea foam.

She could not sit there, worn out with hunger, with knees that trembled with fatigue, numbed with the wet that penetrated everywhere. She stood up with an involuntary moan, and staggered forwards.

Surely the evening was setting in, the light was perceptibly becoming less. The thunder rolled away and muttered in the distance, but the rain continued to fall. Loveday looked up, and around—there was no rent anywhere in the clouds.

If she could but find the road again, the road must lead

to some habitation. Little by little she would push on till she reached a cottage. Any house, however humble, would suffice. Driven inland by the wind, holding to the staff to prevent herself from being blown over, picking her way among gorse-bushes, she reached at length a rough stone wall, and was obliged to turn down it towards the valley before she could find a gate. Then she saw by it what in the dialect of the country is called a tallat—that is, a shed, wattled and roofed with gorse-bushes, and with an open door. She was thankful for the shelter, and crept in; but the floor was dirty, it had been trodden by horses, and the water had entered from the ground outside. She went to the farther end, by the manger, where it was drier, and laid herself down there. She put her hands to her face to wipe the wet from her eyes, and she took the cold, soaked bonnet from her head, and tried to rest against the side, but the prickles of the gorse pierced her. There was nothing she could lean against except one rough piece of wreck wood, that supported the manger. Against this she sat, upright, with her face to the entrance through which the wan light entered, and the wind and rain eddied. She had thrown up her sodden bonnet into the manger; discoloured drops fell from it, stained with the dye in the once pretty ribbons.

At first she felt warm in this sheltered tallat—compared with outside it was warm; but Loveday had carried the chill in with her in her soaked garments, and she soon began to feel numbed. Then she heard a scampering without, and some wild moor ponies appeared at the entrance, roans with bleached manes. They stood in the doorway and stared at her, then plunged away, then returned. One more daring than the rest entered, but when Loveday spoke it threw up its heels and dashed forth again, snorting and whinnying.

This was notice for her to leave. She dared not remain longer, wet to the bone, in the tallat. But when she tried to rise her limbs were so stiff that she could scarcely move them, and her knees when she rose failed under her. She considered that if horses and an enclosure were there, there must be a farm near; but her heart sank. She doubted if she would have strength to reach it.

. . . . . .

Constantine was sitting that same evening in the kitchen at Stanbury with old Carwithen.

A fire was smouldering on the hearth, the wood was from a wreck, and it gave forth the peculiar odour which comes from wood that has been long immersed in sea-water; the afternoon was so stormy and damp that a fire was pleasant. They had the kettle over the fire boiling, and on the table tumblers and a bottle of spirits. Constantine had left Marsland the evening before, after seeing Juliot safe home with the baby, and had slept the night at Stanbury. During the morning he had been about the farm, but had been driven in by the storm. Accordingly he spent his afternoon with old Carwithen and hot rum-and-water. A good deal of rum was drunk at Stanbury, and not one drop of it had paid duty.

'I'll tell ye what it be, your honour,' said Carwithen, knocking the ashes out of his pipe against the side of the fireplace. 'It is my opinion that I put you in the way of becoming master of Stanbury, and I expect some consideration for it. If you be coming to live here along with madam, what is to become of me? Am I to turn out o' Stanbury and go down to Featherstone's Kitchen and live there? I've been long enough here to like a better house. I put you up to getting Stanbury, but I did not reckon on your turning me out.'

'Is it not reasonable?' asked Constantine, impatiently. 'This house is mine—at least, it is my wife's, and here we shall live, as we ought. I am sick of Marsland; I'll no longer stay there with that canting fool, Featherstone; I'll come here. Here I shall be master in my own house, and, whether you like it or not, you must turn out. I will give you employment on the land.'

'At what wage?'

'At an ordinary day-labourer's wage?'

'I am not to have my hind's wage?'

'Of course not, I shall be here to manage my own affairs. I shall not need a hind. I shall not pay more than I am obliged.'

'So, this is what I receive for putting you up to getting the place!'

'How can you talk so foolishly! You have had nothing to do with me and my marriage. I am not a fool.

How the wind roars! It will blow in the window. The water is coming in through the leadwork, and driving in under the door. We shall be swamped if this continues.'

'Master,' said Carwithen, surlily, 'you're well enough and friendly wi' a fellow as long as he serves your purpose, but as soon as you think you can do without him, you're ready to kick him aside with no compunction. That's not Scripture.'

'You have no claim upon me at all. I shall pay such men as I want, and such wages as are reasonable. I shall not want a hind when I am here myself, therefore I shall not keep one. If you are not content to take a labourer's pay you may look out for a hind's place elsewhere. Hark! Good heaven! What is that?'

A blow at the door had startled him, as though some heavy body had fallen against it.

'Nothing but the wind,' said Carwithen. 'I've heard the wind beat at the windows that you could have sworn it was some one outside striking them with his hands. Satan be called the Prince of the Power of the Air. When he heard you threatening to cut me down he were inclined to be in and strangle you for your wickedness.'

'If a man is not to look after his own interests,' said Constantine, 'no one else will look after them for him.'

'True for you,' said Carwithen, 'but a man's best interests don't always lie in using short measure in dealing with others and long measure in dealing with self. Master Paul Featherstone at Marsland will be better served than you at Stanbury, for he measures long to others and short to self.'

'I think it is time for you to go and see after the cattle,' said Constantine. 'Finish your glass of grog first.'

'I'll do that without invitation,' said Carwithen. And when the old man had put his pipe on the mantelshelf and drained his glass, he threw a sack over his shoulders, put a south-wester on his head, grasped a staff, and went to the door.

'Upon my word,' said he,' the wind be beating against it so that I doubt if I can shut the door again. Come you here, master, and put your shoulder to it after I'm outside.'

Then Carwithen opened the door, and the wind and rain rioted into the kitchen, blowing the log into a sudden

blaze, and whirling the white wood ashes in an eddy on the hearth.

'Good Lord!' cried the old man, 'what have we here?'

Upon the threshold lay the body of a woman, soaked with rain; she had apparently reached the door and fallen unconscious on the step as she tried to knock for admission. Her failing powers had carried her so far, and there deserted her.

Constantine was behind Carwithen, with his head down, against the wind, that blew his hair about. The old man knelt, and turned the face of the woman towards the light.

'My God!' gasped Constantine, and smote his brow. 'What is to be done? Loveday! Loveday!'

CHAPTER XLV.

FEATHERSTONE'S KITCHEN.

In a hollow of the moor over which poor Loveday had wandered in the storm without finding shelter was a cottage: the roof was of turf, and so low that it was invisible till one was close upon it. It had but a single face, and that was turned, contrary to the invariable custom, towards the sea. All the other sides were banked up with peat, out of which the grass grew rankly, so that no one coming on the house would suppose it was a cabin inhabited by human beings, and not a gigantic rabbit warren.

In front of this hovel, on a bench, sat Loveday and a girl. The girl was Tamsin Carwithen, the daughter of the old hind at Stanbury. She lived in this odd turf house, and earned a few shillings by watching the cattle turned out to graze on the down. She was a young woman of thirty, with strongly marked features, a rough, uncivilised girl, almost as wild as the colt that had claimed the tallat into which Loveday had intruded.

'How came I here?' said Loveday. 'I remember nothing.'

'I reckon you don't,' answered Thomasine—Tamsin, as she was called. 'You was nigh melted right away, you must have been out and about in that storm. My word! it came down proper solid water sheets.'

'Where was I found?'

'At Stanbury. You'd got so far and could go no further, I reckon. Father found you over the drexil (threshold) when he went to open the door.'

'But who is your father?'

'Old Dick Carwithen, sure enough. Who other?'

'He took me into Stanbury?'

'Ees, he did. He and the young Squire.'

'Who?'

'Squire Rock. Father and he were sitting, smoking and talking and drinking sperrits and water together, and they heard a sort of bang agin' the door, but they took no particular heed. The wind were hammering that powerful on window and door, they thought it the wind. But, after a bit, father up and out after the cattle, and there he found you, as I said, in a faint, and wet as seaweed, on the drexil. So he called to the Squire, and the Squire and he carried you in, and mother, her came, and they took you to the best bedroom, and there the men left you, and mother undressed you, and put on you warm blankets, and set a hot brick to your feet, and made some rabbit broth, and fed you with it, and last of all you was dressed in my clothes and brought here.'

'But why here?'

'Sure enough, I cannot tell. The master wouldn't allow you to bide in Stanbury. He said, no, you must be took to Featherstone's Kitchen.'

'To what?'

'To this place, for certain; this be Featherstone's Kitchen. Not, you know, Squire Featherstone's kitchen to Marsland. Lord bless you! don't think that. There be reasons why this house is called Featherstone's Kitchen, and there be others like it, I'm told, further down the coast, right away to Land's End, but about here I know of none but this. It don't take its name after Squire Paul, bless your heart! It was christened after his uncle, who was a mighty rough sort of a man, very fond of the sea, and made it his pleasure to dare the gaugers. There be queer talk of he, I can tell you. I've nothing again' him; he were a useful man in his time, he dug out this here Kitchen, and it serves its purpose now as well as then. I've heard tell that old Featherstone were here one day, sitting on a

cask, when in at the door came a couple of sheriff's officers to take him. "My men," said he, and he took a pistol in his hand, "I'm sitting on a keg of gunpowder. I don't care a hang for my life, nor half a hang for yours. If you don't sheer off at once, I'll discharge the contents of the pistol into this here keg I be sitting on." Sure as cows have calves, and not calves cows, the sheriff's officers did sheer off.'

'But why was I brought here?' again asked Loveday.

'The young Squire would have it,' answered the girl. 'As soon as ever they seed there was life in you, then he gave father and mother no rest, but swore you should not stay and be nursed at Stanbury. Naught would please him but that you was taken to the Kitchen. So to the Kitchen you was took, and in the Kitchen you be, leastways, a-sitting in front of him (it).'

Loveday was pained and surprised.

'I reckon,' Tamsin continued, 'he were a-thinking of his missus. The master is married, you know, to Squire Featherstone's sister. The property be hers, not his. I've heard my father tell that it be that tightly tied up that the master can't lay a finger to it, can't sell a tree off it, or an acre out of it. I reckon, all the money belongs to Madam, and none to he; which must be as galling to a man as riding in market on a lady's saddle. Well, it seems to me, it stands this way. He thought his missus might be jealous, hearing there was a leddy staying at Stanbury, and he so much there and not much at Marsland. If you larrup a donkey with a bunch of thistles he'll not eat a mouthful of thistles never after, he takes a distaste to the sight of them. So I reckon it may be with men, when they've a wife about 'em, a-scratching and a-stinging, they take ever after a sort of disgust to the sight of petticoats. Women are jealous creatures, it is their nature. Mother told me that the young Squire laid it on her and father as hard as he could, they was not to say a word to nobody about you. He had you brought here where nobody would see you and none be the wiser, and run about telling tales and making of scandal. Squire Rock were mighty particular that you should be well cared for. You was to have chicken and rabbit broth, and wine, and wear my Sunday clothes, and mother's flannel petticoat, and have a hot bottle in

your bed, and red currant jelly, and just anything one could think of to make a leddy happy and contented.'

Loveday sat silent, looking seaward and musing. Presently she found an explanation of Constantine's conduct which satisfied her, as it did not show him to be heartless. He had doubtless considered that she had escaped from Marsland with the intention of hiding herself. She could not remain concealed at Stanbury, therefore he had removed her to the cottage where she would be seen by no one, and where she might remain for many days without her hiding-place being discovered.

'If you'll come with me,' said Thomasine, 'I'll show you round the Kitchen. This be a queer place, sure enough, to those as is unacquainted with the like. The old Rover Featherstone, as he were called, he dursn't dispose of his goods too near to Marsland, though he had a store there, so he had a cave scooped out in the rock here, in our cottage. Mind you this bit o' land didn't belong to he. My grandfather were a squatter on it, and nobody said him nay. My grandfather was glad enough to oblige Red Featherstone in anything, so he helped to have a hole dug in the rock from our inner wood store. Squire Paul be another kind of man altogether. He have his fancies, and Red Featherstone had his. Men's tastes differ—some are all for religion, and some for wickedness; some can eat mussels, and others can't. I've known a man blown up and nigh strangled by eating of a dish of mussels which were innocent to another's stomach. It's just the same with smuggling, and wrecking, and drinking. They suited Red Featherstone's stomach, and they don't agree with Squire Paul. We ain't all constituted alike, praises be! Father ain't a dainty man. He can do with all sorts, pick a bit of Scripture, and then pick a bit of smuggling; he can combine Gospel and drink, and curdle neither, but make a sort of junket out of 'em, which is a gift. Praises be! If you will come along of me, I'll show y'a path in the face of the cliff down to the Cove. You see I keep a pair o' donkeys on the down. They can scramble up and down the cliffs, and are as sure-footed as a fly. When a boat comes into Marsland Mouth then they send the kegs over here in a row-boat, if weather permits, if not on the backs of donkeys. Bless your heart! not on mine. All the farmers round

about keep donkeys and lend 'em for the purpose. The smugglers take 'em, and no questions are asked. The farmers are pleased to help and loan 'em. But if a boat can be run to our Cove, then my beasts go down the cliff and bring up on their backs what sperrits and other things are for this neighbourhood, and I store them away in Featherstone's Kitchen. So all the kitchens aloug the coast are supplied; I dispose of the sperrits and take the money, and so all parties are accommodated, which is a provision of nature, beautiful to think on, sure enough.'

'Have you never been married?' asked Loveday.

'Never,' answered Thomasine, sorrowfully. 'That's the only real drawback to a place like this. It's so out of the way you don't get a fair start with other girls. It is not as if the men will come after you, it is you must go after them. Men are much like snipe in their flight, and a straight shot from the shoulder won't bring them down; you must allow for their dipping. It is only the old and heavy chaps as whirr up under your feet and go level away like a partridge. And yet,' continued Thomasine, 'I ain't sure that I shan't come in to the goal and get the prize before others that have started before me, and used more exertion in the running. You see, Miss, the race for a husband among us maidens is very much like a race in sacks at a fair. There be a deal of hindrance and impediment, but along we go. It is she as takes the littlest steps and minds to keep the sack up about her neck as will come in at last, not they as makes the big jumps and is most fiery eager. They go down on their noses pretty smart, and lie about like potatoes turned out of a garden. It is shuffling on, not leaps, as does it.'

The talkative girl was interrupted by the appearance of Constantine, who came over the down towards the cottage.

Thomasine at once retired into the hovel. Constantine greeted Loveday with restraint; he feared the eyes and ears of Thomasine, and he drew Loveday from the front of the cottage, away to the edge of the cliff, where they were beyond earshot.

'Loveday,' said he, 'I am glad you are better. You have no conception how anxious and distressed I have been. But what can have induced you to come to Stan-

bury? What more likely than such a course to arouse suspicion?'

'I did not intend it,' she answered, meekly. 'I ran away from Marsland. I could not remain there longer——'

'Why not? I told you I would look out for some situation for you. You ought to have remained.'

'I could not, Con,' she said gently, but firmly. 'I will tell you why. I was there in a wrong position. I was there as an unmarried woman, and Mr. Featherstone has asked me——' She faltered.

'I understand,' said Constantine, testily; 'well, what of that? You refused him. It will do him good. He has his own way too much. His sister worships him, kneels before him in an adoring attitude, and that has turned his head. I am glad to hear he has had his nose tweaked. It will draw some of the fantastic humours out of him.'

'After that I could not stay.'

'Why not? I didn't ask you to stay long. Don't you see that by your conduct you are exciting suspicion? You think only of yourself, Loveday, and have no consideration for me. You should have stayed on a few days, then have given a formal notice, said that your health would not allow you to undertake the duties, and gone, and there would have been the end of the matter. But to run away, as if you had stolen some silver spoons—Good heavens, Loveday! Juliot and Paul will be imagining all sorts of things.'

'No, Constantine, there you are mistaken.'

'I am not mistaken. I am alarmed for myself. It is I am in danger, not you. You think only of how you may get away from a place where you have had a great shock and grief. I do not blame you for wishing to leave, but I do blame you greatly for putting me in danger. You should not be selfish, Loveday. Selfishness is objectionable in a man, but it is offensive in a woman.'

'What will you have me do, now?' asked Loveday, unwilling to argue.

'Do—there is nothing that can be done but remain where you are. You are like a draughtsman on a board driven into a corner, with only two moves, one forward and one back. Here you are safe enough, if you do not take flight again. Do you suppose that happiness is to be

caught, as a child goes after a bird, with a pinch of salt to clap on its tail? Happiness will come to you in good time, if you take matters easy, and do not go racing over the country with your reticule in your hand, chasing it.'

'You quite mistake me,' said Loveday, gravely. 'I have given up all hopes of happiness. I left Marsland because I could not remain there after Mr. Featherstone had asked me to be his wife.'

'That was what Paul meant by taking you out in the boat, was it? Juliot played into his hands. A pair of ninnies, both.' Constantine was angry. If he loved anyone beside himself, that person was Loveday. 'Nothing in the world would give me greater pleasure than to take a cudgel to his head and beat the nonsense out of it. Unfortunately, just now, and till you are well away, I am in his power, and he may do me a cursed turn—show me the white horse, as the wrestlers say as they give the fling that breaks the backbone. I wish it were in my power to kick up his heels. I shall have it some day. I must wait my time, and then I shall pay him out for daring to insult you with his addresses.'

'You must not speak thus,' said Loveday. 'Mr. Featherstone is the soul of honour. If he addressed me, he did so with respect, and in ignorance of my position, which ignorance is due to you, who dare not tell him the truth.'

'Oh, you reproach me!' said Constantine, angrily. 'The compliment of an offer has disposed you to think kindly of the crackbrained quack. You turn against me, of course, following the rest. Such is the way of the world. My father never had a good word for me, and Gerans was the hero. I was always in the background, always forced to play second fiddle. Now because I am in difficulty and danger, even you will not spare me.'

'Constantine!' She looked reproachfully at him, and he coloured.

'I meant no harm,' he said. 'You must make allowances for me. I am harassed and nervous. I live in daily terror of discovery. Perhaps you have not fully realised what discovery would entail on me.'

'What am I to do now? May I not go?'

'You must remain concealed in this place. On no

account allow anyone to see you. I have no doubt that that fool Featherstone will be stirring up the neighbourhood in quest of you. I have insisted on old Carwithen and his wife holding their tongues. None but they know that you are here. As soon as I can I will get you away by boat to Clovelly. Give me time to consider what is best, and all will come right. I'm like a boy with a puzzle map. It is confusion now, but with patience I shall make it out and fit all into a consistent whole. Now I'm poking the toe of Italy in the side of Russia, and fitting Timbuctoo into Great Britain.'

'I have no clothes fit to go in,' said Loveday. 'Everything is in my box at Marsland.'

'There it must remain. You must not meddle with that. I will see what I can get for you. Or, stay! write a letter as if from Exeter, and say you have found a home there with your cousin, and I will get it posted to Juliot.'

'No,' answered Loveday. 'I will not speak or write an untruth. I want to be somewhere whence I can write. I cannot remain here for long.'

'Stay a week. Only a week. Before seven days are past something shall be decided. Now I must go. Tamsin Carwithen must not see us so long together, or she will suspect something.'

CHAPTER XLVI.

RICHARD CARWITHEN.

Loveday was not missed at first by Paul and Juliot. She did not appear at breakfast, but neither was surprised, because they thought she was tired with the excursion on the water, and hoped that she had overslept herself and was recruiting her strength.

'Well, Paul?' said Juliot, with inquiry in her tone and in the look of her eyes.

Paul Featherstone sighed, and shook his head. 'I was too precipitate, Juliot. I feared it myself, but you encouraged me. She has had great sorrows which have so crushed her that she cannot yet look up. She is like a bruised and broken flower, lying on the ground; we must raise her, and tie her up, and have patience, allow the sap

to flow, and the healing processes to begin. We must not demand fresh bloom of the flower this season ; we must be satisfied if it does not wither away.'

'I thought that your regard, dear Paul, would have been the stay for the flower. It would have held to that and become strong.'

'Juliot, I have reproached myself severely for my haste. But I acted from the best motive. I desired to be honourable and open with her. As she was in the house, and had won my respect and love, I did not consider it proper to leave her in ignorance of my sentiments, and to allow her to settle into a house in a menial position when I purposed to make her its mistress. But I was too precipitate. I hurt and alarmed her.'

'Oh, Paul ! what will she do now ? She will hardly be induced to stay here if she has refused your addresses.'

Featherstone leaned back, and looked with dismay at his sister. 'Juliot !' he exclaimed, 'I had not thought of that. Where is Rock ?'

'John went back to Stanbury last night. He is very busy there.'

'So it seems. He used not to be there so much. But the place has demands on him. Now he is there all day and night as well.'

'He tells me the men there need much supervision.'

Paul left Marsland after breakfast, without saying whither he was going, consequently he was not at home when the discovery was made that Loveday had fled. Her packed box, the bed not slept in, showed that she had gone. Juliot sent after her brother, but Paul was not to be found, and did not return till noon. Then, only, was he made aware of Loveday's disappearance.

The morning had been lost in looking for him. Juliot was incapable of giving directions for a search. Paul was filled with consternation and self-reproach. 'Oh, poor soul, poor soul !' he exclaimed, 'I have driven her from her newly discovered retreat. Juliot, she *must* be found and brought back ; it is not she, it is I who must go. It is my fault that this has come about. I will go to Stanbury, and let Rock live here for a while. She must not be driven away. God be merciful to her ! She is in no fit condition of mind or body for a journey.'

'Whither has she gone?' asked Juliot.

'I doubt not, towards Exeter,' answered Paul. 'She let fall, as I was driving her here, something about a cousin whom she had purposed visiting when arrested on her journey by my advertisement. She has certainly started on her way thither. I shall reproach myself for this all my days. The weather is changing. We shall have a storm this afternoon, and she may be exposed to it!' He ordered the horse to be put in the trap at once. There was room in this conveyance for two only. 'Juliot,' said Paul, 'I shall take Willy Penrose with me, and when we find her I shall alight and let Willy drive her home, and I will come after afoot.'

Paul spent the whole afternoon in the storm, driving from place to place making inquiries, always without result. The district was thinly populated, and there were more ways than one by which Loveday might have gone. No main road ran thence in the direction of Exeter, but lanes and parish roads led away, an intricate ramification, towards villages to the east. Had she gone across country by one of these towards Torrington? or had she gone by another to Holsworthy? or had she taken the main road along the coast to Hartland, intending to follow thence the highway to Exeter through Bideford? or had she gone along the coast to Stratton, to take the coach thence to Launceston? It was uncertain which of all these ways she had gone. One was just as near as another. There was actually only one direction in which she could not have gone—due west, over the cliffs, and into the sea.

Paul, disappointed on one road, took another; the horse became fagged, his companion dissatisfied. The storm raged about them. The rain drenched them, driving through all the clothes they wore, forming a pool in the bottom of the gig. Now and then the horse stood still, and obstinately refused to stir, till some whirling rush of rain had spent itself. The tempest defeated the object of Paul. It was most likely that Loveday had taken refuge somewhere off the road. It drove everyone in doors, there was no traffic, therefore none to see her, if she did pass. Late in the evening, almost as wearied as his horse and man, but reluctant still to give up the search, Paul turned homewards: perhaps he would not have done that

but for the hope that some tidings of the missing girl had been obtained nearer home—that, possibly, she might have been driven back by the storm. It was, to him, unaccountable that no one had seen her, yet he had asked at every cottage he had passed, of every traveller he had encountered.

When he reached home, he was disappointed. Nothing had been learned of her. The servants were questioned. The only thing that could be elicited from them was that the hall door was discovered to be unlocked in the morning. Not a line was found in her room to afford a clue. There was no fresh direction on the box to show whither it was to be sent. The old address to her cousin's in Exeter was, indeed, there, scored through with a pencil. On his return Paul wrote at once to this address, but too late for the post.

'Has Rock been here, Juliot?'

'No, Paul. I suppose the tempest has detained him at Stanbury.'

'I have been everywhere but thither. It is mysterious, prodigiously strange to me. She seems to have disappeared as effectually as if the earth had swallowed her up.'

'Take off your wet clothes, Paul, or you will be laid up. You are not a strong man. You must have a posset, and go to bed.'

'I—I take a hot posset!' exclaimed Paul, 'and she—she, poor soul, whom I drove from this house by my persecution is, perhaps, in cold, and wet, and hunger! My God! I cannot bear to think of what may be! Oh, Juliot, Juliot!' He was overcome with emotion. He took his sister by the hand, and covered his face with the other.

'I'll get a change of clothes,' he said, when he had recovered himself; 'but I cannot go to bed. I have sent Will Penrose home, he is tired and wet and out of temper; and I have bid Roger Gale harness the other horse and bring him round in half an hour.'

'But night is set in; whither are you going?'

'I shall drive now to Stratton. I have thought that she may have avoided the nearest houses and made for the town; we came thence, and she would naturally think to go back thither. There she knows a coach is to be caught which would carry her away. I will drive to-night to Stratton, and make inquiries. She may even have gone

thither by the coast through Stanbury. Rock might give us news if he were here, but I doubt her having gone that way; she would have passed Stanbury before the storm broke, and Rock would for certain have brought her back. It is much more likely that she would go by the way she came, and avoid the houses.'

Then he went to his room and changed his clothes. When vested in a dry suit he came down, and hastily took some refreshment. 'I will go alone now,' said he; 'I will not take Roger with me. Even if I found her, I would not bring her home to-night, but place her where she would be safe and well cared for.'

Then he departed. The storm was over, the violence of the gale had spent itself, but it left behind a small drizzle that in time would wet one exposed to it as thoroughly as the previous pelting rain.

It was late at night, or rather very early in the morning, when Paul returned. His journey had been in vain. He had been to every inn in the little town of Stratton, but could hear nothing of Loveday. He left word at the coach office that she was not to go till he had been communicated with, should she appear there. And, finally, he announced at each of the inns that he would give a liberal golden reward to any one who should bring him information which might lead to her recovery.

When Paul Featherstone came home he was completely worn out in body and in mind. He was not a strong man, and the exposure to the wet and the wind for twelve hours, and the strain on his nerves, had exhausted him. He threw off his sodden garments, and went to bed, but he could not sleep. He could think only of the poor girl, a wanderer, in the storm, without a home to which to go, without a friend on whom to lean. She was not restored to her full strength since her illness. Had she succumbed? Was she lying dead behind a hedge, or in a copse? His brow was as wet, and not his brow only, his eyes as well, at the thought, as if they were still in the drift of the rain. He put both his hands over his face, and as he lay, hour by hour, instead of thinking further of what might have happened, he prayed.

Next morning Constantine appeared.

'Well, Featherstone! how are you all after the storm?

The wind took our new hayrick and blew it over. To-day, if middling fine, we shall try to dry the hay, and rick it again. Was your hay thatched? We didn't reckon on such a gale, did we?'

Then Paul told him of the loss of Loveday.

'Don't you trouble your head about her,' said Constantine, with affected composure. 'The poor creature was evidently off her head, and has gone over the cliffs into the sea. I never supposed her right in the brain—gone melancholy mad. I've heard of such cases.'

Paul looked at him with horror. The idea that Loveday had come to an end in this way had not occurred to him. Even now he could hardly bring himself to entertain the conjecture that she had voluntarily destroyed herself, but he remembered that she had walked in her sleep once, and it was possible that she had again gone sleep-walking in the direction of the sea. No doubt but her thoughts that night had been on the excursion with him in the boat; what more likely than that she had dreamt of the sea, and gone towards it—perhaps down the same road they had traversed together, to and from the bay?

This thought made such an impression on Paul that he left the house immediately, and descended the lane to Marsland Mouth, and there searched the beach. Not a trace of Loveday was to be found. He went to the boat-house and searched that. He explored the caves in the rocks. Nowhere a token that she had been there—the tide had risen and ebbed since they had left the boat, so that every footmark on the sand was effaced.

When slowly and sadly, and, it must be added, wearily, he ascended the steep hill to Marsland, his attention was caught by the bush of ash from which he had cut the staff for Loveday. Where was that staff? He considered when he reached home. The staff was gone. She must have taken it with her. Surely, then, she intended it for a support on a long or steep walk. This and the packed box, and the unslept-in bed, satisfied him that she had not gone from the house walking in her sleep. That she had taken the stick with her assured him that she had not meditated suicide.

It was a relief to him to think this. It was a comfort to him, a very minute one, but still something of a comfort

to think that the staff he had cut for her had been a stay to her.

Three days passed, and still no news of Loveday. The anxiety was wearing Paul, who reproached himself, unnecessarily and unreasonably, but he had an over-sensitive conscience. His fears that she might have been overcome by exhaustion, and died in the storm, or that in the cloud and driving rain she might have fallen over the cliffs returned. He went in a boat along the coast, searching every margin of sand, but still, ineffectually. He went round the neighbourhood again, offering rewards, but no one put in a claim for any. He could attend to none of the business of the farm. His mind was engrossed with the search for Loveday.

'Please your honour,' said Carwithen, appearing before him as he went out on foot down the avenue to resume his inquiries; he had worn out his horses, and was obliged on this day to give them rest. 'Please your honour,' said Carwithen, 'Scripture says, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. If you want to find the young lady, you must pay folks for the trouble they take in hunting after her.'

'I am ready to do so. Dick, have you news? Do not keep what you may chance to know from me. What has brought you from Stanbury?'

'Your honour, I thought I'd take the liberty of asking, How much?'

'What do you mean?'

'Your honour have promised a reward to such as can give information respecting Miss Penhalligan.'

'Dick Carwithen,' exclaimed Paul, suddenly, 'where did you find that staff of ash? I recognise it. I cut it for her the evening before she disappeared.'

'That may be. And it may be also that I can tell more than about where the stick were found. The truth of the matter is this, master. Squire Rock and I don't hit it off together as I should like. Scripture says, Thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together.'

'Tell me,' said Featherstone, 'tell me straight out, what you have discovered. I will reward you.'

'Look here, master, it turns to this, How much? Just

as all men turn to dust and ashes, so do all questions turn to guineas and shillings. What will you pay?'

'Name your price,' said Paul, impatiently.

'There's that little holding of forty acres at Coombe,' said Carwithen. 'Old Kennard is dying, and when he's gone it will be vacant: he had it for life, as he reclaimed it out of the moor. Now, if I may have that at three shillings an acre for fourteen years' lease I'll tell you a good deal.'

Paul looked at him with surprise and disgust.

'Ah!' said Carwithen, 'I'll do more than tell you, I'll take you where you shall see her, but whether alive or dead I won't say till you give me my price. If I tread out your corn, I mustn't be muzzled. Let me assure you of this—if you don't hear it from me you will never know anything more about her.'

Paul gave way at once.

'Come with me down to Marsland Mouth,' said Carwithen, 'and we will go by boat under the rocks.' Then he laughed. 'I was not to have a hind's place any longer, but to be reduced to work as a labourer and have a labourer's wage!'

CHAPTER XLVII.

DISCOVERED.

Constantine went every day to Featherstone's Kitchen, especially at such times as he knew Tamsin Carwithen would not be there. Tamsin came to the house at Stanbury daily to assist her mother with the washing; and Constantine took the occasion for slipping off to the Kitchen on the cliff, so as to enjoy a long conversation with Loveday unobserved.

The old inclination for Loveday revived in his heart, and the attraction that drew him to her originally again exerted over him its former power. The notice that Paul took of her had made him jealous, and he was angry with him for having dared to propose to her. A first love is always surrounded with a halo of romance which surrounds no second love. Moreover, Constantine had never really

cared for Juliot. He had taken her for the sake of Stanbury and an easy life. He was tired of the monotony of his existence at Marsland, impatient of the fear which kept him there a prisoner, and, when he saw Loveday again, he longed to recover what he had lost or thrown away. The recollection—the old courtship, the early happy love—spun its delicate gleaming magic fibres round his heart, and filled him with melancholy. How happy he would have been with her, if he had had the courage to confess his marriage to the old Squire, and his father had accepted it, and made him a small allowance, which, with what he earned in an office, would have sufficed to support them! What might have been is always so superior to what is.

He had forfeited Loveday's regard, but hardly lost her love. Was it wholly impossible for him to recover the regard?

Surely not, if he showed her good proof of repentance.

He was uneasy at the efforts made by Paul Featherstone to find her. Wherever he went, he heard nothing talked about but the missing lady. The labourers leaned on their picks and discussed the subject. He was asked by every one he met whether any news about her had reached Marsland. Carwithen took a grim delight in exciting his alarm. What the relation was between Mr. Rock and the lady Richard Carwithen could not understand, nor why his master pressed him with such urgency to be silent. Constantine had no fear of Carwithen betraying him, because he supposed it was the old man's interest to remain in favour with him, as Squire of Stanbury, and because Carwithen, he knew, had no regard for Paul Featherstone. He had, moreover, promised to pay him the same reward for keeping the secret as Featherstone had offered for news of the lost lady.

'I can get no sleep,' said Constantine to Loveday. 'Paul is raising an insane hue-and-cry, and disturbing the entire country. I want your bonnet and cloak. I will throw them into the sea; they will be washed ashore, and then, perhaps, this prodigious fuss will abate—Paul will suppose that you have drowned yourself.'

'I will not let you have them for this purpose,' answered Loveday. 'I would not have Mr. Featherstone suppose it of me, that I could destroy myself.'

'Oh! he may think you tumbled over the cliffs, and were drowned accidentally.'

Loveday made no reply to this, and Constantine, seeing he had annoyed her, did not press the point.

'I am much afraid,' she said, after a while, 'that my brother will be alarmed as well, and make inquiries all the way from Wadebridge to Launceston, and so be led on to Marsland; then all will come out.'

Constantine turned livid. He had not considered this danger.

'Loveday,' he said, after a few moments of anxious thought, as he paced the turf near the cottage, 'I have made up my mind; I will do what you advised. I will leave Marsland for ever, Marsland and Stanbury both. I will go out into the world, and begin life afresh. I have acted very wrongly, and I will use my best endeavour to undo the wrong. I tell you, Loveday, that I cannot bear myself for my error, and I am terribly scared at the prospect that it entails. I can have no peace any more, now that I have seen you again. After all—you are my wife—my own dear wife, to whom I am bound, with whom I promised to fight through the world. I tell you the whole truth, Loveday, I have never, never loved any one but you. You I loved in the dear, happy old days at Towan, days of innocence and brightness. I lie awake at night and think of them. Whilst I am about the farm all day I am recalling them. I did wrong in not telling my father at once when we married. I did wrong in persuading you to marry me without asking his consent. One wrong act, we are told, draws on a chain of others. It has been so in this case, I have proved it; and I reproach myself for the first and all that followed. But I suppose it is inevitable. If once we do wrong, we must go on from wrong to wrong till brought to our senses. That, I presume, is a moral necessity, a law of the universe, just like gravitation, and the revolution of the sun. Now I see what I have done, and am resolved never to do anything that is wrong again. I loved you always, and I will love you ever, as I promised and vowed, and if you have the spirit of Christianity in you, you will forgive me.'

When Constantine told Loveday that he loved her, and her only, then, as was natural, her heart bounded and her

cheeks flushed. But the excitation was momentary, the colour went again, and her pulse resumed its ordinary beat. She shook her head. She tried to speak, but her words failed.

'I will tell you what my plan is,' continued Constantine. 'I have resolved to leave England. I cannot settle anywhere in the British Isles. If that owl, Paul, makes such a disturbance because you are lost, who are nothing to him, what a tenfold disturbance will he make to find me, whom he married to his sister. He would stir up the whole country till I was tracked out. No, no, Loveday. That will never do for me. I will leave the country. I will go to America, where, in a new world, I may begin a new and a better life—with you.'

Loveday had been seated. She started to her feet and walked abruptly away, along the down, to be for a few moments by herself to consider this proposal of Constantine's. She was his wife. It was her duty to be with him. He loved her and loved her only. She loved him and him only. He had sinned against her and against Juliot. Ought she so far to forget the past as to accompany him? She could not answer this question at once. Indeed she hardly put it to herself as a question to be decided at once. She was overcome by the offer, by the glimmer it afforded her of a future home.

Constantine lacked the tact to leave her to herself. He went after her. He went from the extreme of despondency to the most sanguine elation. His scheme was perfect. All would come right now. He was learned in the law—that is, he had been a few years in an office, engrossing—and would be certain to obtain a judgeship in the United States. He was perfectly acquainted with the management of a farm. He would obtain a grant of land, and build a log-house, and Loveday and he would dwell together in it, as happy as two wood-pigeons. He was well-educated, he would set up a school and charge high, and train young American citizens in knowledge and virtue, and realise a fortune—a man of parts from England could not fail to succeed. Anything, everything was open to him.

'Oh, Constantine!' exclaimed Loveday, 'what would Mr. Featherstone and Juliot think if they found that we had gone together to America? I would not that she

should know how she has been deceived by you, and I would not have him think unworthily of me.'

'What can it matter what their opinion is of us, when we are beyond the sea? Besides, I would write to Featherstone and tell him everything. Then the responsibility of undeceiving his sister would lie on his shoulders, and he would not think ill of you. He would, on the contrary, think highly of you for following your proper husband over the Atlantic to his new home.'

'Oh, Constantine!' said she, in a tone of agony, distressed by the conflicting feelings in her bosom, 'is it really, really true that you love me alone, that you will forget poor Juliot and the little child she has borne to you?'

'If it were not so, would I make this proposal to you?' he answered. 'Consider the sacrifice I am ready to make at the altar of duty. I lose Stanbury, a comfortable home, and a nice fortune, to go forth in poverty, as an exile—what for? Because, Loveday, my conscience tells me I ought to do it. When conscience speaks we must obey. And in this case inclination jumps with obligation. I have told you I love you. I cannot live away from you. If you refuse to come with me I will stay in England, but I will not remain here with Juliot. I will follow you wherever you go; I will follow you like a dog. You shall not be able to shake me off, except in one way, by delivering me over to justice; and that you will not do—you are too noble, too generous, too good at heart. That is a contingency not to be considered. Remember that you are my wife in the sight of heaven, that you are responsible to heaven for me. If you let me go alone to America, I do not know what will become of me. I shall have nothing to live for—no home, no happiness. I dare say I shall take to drink and perish miserably. Of course you will come with me. You are not, I trust, lost to all sense of religion and moral obligation.'

Loveday musing looked into his face, and shook her head, whilst pressing her hands on her heaving bosom. Could she flatter herself that her reappearance had driven Juliot wholly from his heart? That in a foreign land the yearning for his little son would not awake in him and make him restless to return to England and see his child again? Was he one who would endure the privations of

exile? One who had sufficient tenacity of purpose to hold to his resolution? In America, if they had to undergo hardships, would he not turn against her, and reproach her with banishment? Was he trustworthy? Also, she felt great repugnance against uniting her lot with him now after his treachery and falsehood, and the wrong he had done to her and to Juliot and to Paul.

'I love you,' she said, 'I love you dearly. God who reads the heart, knows it. But what happiness would I find if I knew you were unhappy? I am glad that you still love me; but we can never be happy together again—never!'

'My dear Loveday,' exclaimed Constantine, 'what nonsense you talk! Of course we can be happy together. In a new world, amid fresh scenes, fresh occupations, surrounded by new people, we shall be quite happy. We shall shake off all these unpleasantnesses, like a dog who gets out of a bath. He shakes himself, and away fly the drops in all directions, and in ten minutes he is dry as Paul Featherstone. We shall sit together over our own fireside and not give even a thought to the past. Oh, Loveday, how happy we shall be! Cares, fears, troubles drowned like Pharaoh in the deep of the sea, sunk deeper than he, as the Atlantic is more profound than the Red Sea. We will have a garden of our own, and put mignonette under the window—I am so fond of the scent of mignonette—and we will have a little summer-house in the corner of our garden with Banksia roses trained over it; that will be charming. And then we will sit there in the evenings, and I will read to you "Guy Mannering" whilst you knit my stockings. Have you read that? It is prodigiously interesting. Then, consider this, my sweet wife, we shall be in a climate that is dry. Here we are in a warm bath and a steam alike in every season. In America when the winter sets in there is real cold weather, and in the summer there is real heat. On my word, Loveday, I am all eagerness to start.'

'Constantine,' said Loveday, looking at him with eyes that streamed with tears, 'do not try me with such pictures. It cannot be, at least not now. That you should go is right, and I do not say that after a time I will not rejoin you, but not now, certainly not now. Go yourself, and, if you think proper, write to Mr. Featherstone and tell

him the whole truth. But I cannot go with you. Perhaps after three years, when you have shown yourself in earnest, I may follow, but I will not, I cannot, go with you now. The sooner you go, the better. Do not delay; it is right that you should depart.'

'This is unkind,' said Constantine, impatiently. 'You want to drive me away, and you will not help me in my difficulties. It is easy to say Go, but harder to do it. I have little money, and one cannot cross the ocean without means. I shall have to sell stock off the farm, and raise something in spite of Paul Featherstone, who will ask me what I am about.'

'If you have no right to make money on Stanbury, do not try to do it. Take my advice once again, Constantine. Be straightforward and truthful. Go, as the prodigal in the parable, and your father will not cast you out. Confess everything to Mr. Gaverock and ask him to help you to cross to America. He will certainly assist you, and assist you liberally. Is he not your father? Then from Towan write to Mr. Featherstone, and tell him the whole truth, and tell him you are leaving England for ever, a penitent for the wrong you have done. He is so good, he will accept your repentance, and not attempt pursuit and demand chastisement. You must write, leaving all to him. If he were to demand your punishment, accept it; give him the time to decide whether he will punish, or whether he will pardon. That will be most honourable, and when he has granted you leave to depart unmolested, go. After three years, Constantine, when you have proved your own heart, if you still desire my presence, I will cross the ocean to you, and I will never by word or look reproach you for the past, but freely, heartily forgive you your trespass against me, as I look for forgiveness of my trespasses from heaven. There, Constantine, in pledge of my sincerity I give you my hand—no—not one, I give you both.'

As she held out her arms, and he clasped her hands, they were startled by the appearance of Paul Featherstone, standing before them. Their backs had been turned to the path that ascended the cliff from the little strand, but as she gave Constantine her hands she turned, intending to go back to the cottage, having said her last words. In so turning she saw Paul, and her start induced Con-

stantine to turn also. Constantine turned pale with fear, and dropped the hands of Loveday. She felt the blood rush to her face and temples. She covered her eyes with her hands, and fled to the hovel.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

A STROKE.

Paul Featherstone and Constantine Gaverock stood confronting each other. Both were pale as chalk.

Constantine was in deadly fear lest Paul should have heard any portion of his conversation with Loveday. But Paul had not caught a word. He could not have approached to listen to them; to do this was repugnant to his character. But he had seen enough to send the blood to his heart. She whom he had been seeking everywhere was living concealed under the protection of his brother-in-law. She had run away from Marsland to be near him. That they were on very intimate terms their conversation, and the way in which they had held each other's hands, the dismay with which they had started asunder on seeing him, sufficiently proved. He had been hurt by the coldness and callousness of Rock towards the suffering girl. It had never occurred to him that this might be assumed to disguise a warmer feeling. Now he was too startled to consider the relation in which they stood to each other, or account for the intimacy, to speculate when it had begun, and to what an extent it had been carried.

Constantine was the first to recover his self-possession sufficiently to ask Paul what he wanted there. Had he come in quest of him?

Paul Featherstone turned his eyes slowly upon him. He had been looking after Loveday, flying to the cottage. He was overwhelmed by the double betrayal of himself and his sister.

'I do not seek you,' answered he, gravely. 'Not you—certainly not you—the husband of my sister Juliot.'

Constantine winced; but the words of Paul afforded him some relief. Paul would not have emphasised the

relationship if he had any suspicions of the truth. This conviction revived his courage.

'What do you want?' he asked. 'I know you have extraordinary ways. Are you qualifying to act as Jack-in-the-box, popping up unexpectedly under one's nose?'

Featherstone did not deign a reply; he had a dark vein on his brow, and this swelled. When he was much disturbed it puffed and became purple. He was indignant and angry, but he had not lost his usual self-control, his somewhat pedantic stateliness of manner.

'There is nothing wonderful in a poor girl seeking protection with me against your impertinence,' said Constantine. He stooped, picked a pink-flowering thrift, and began to bite the stalk. His jaws were trembling; he did this to conceal the chatter of his teeth. 'Do you not think,' asked Constantine, with low cunning, attacking his brother-in-law to protect himself from assault, 'do you not think that the advertisement in the *Light of the West* was worded wrong, and should have stood, "Wanted a companion for Paul Featherstone; young, pretty, and sanctimonious"?'

'Rock!' said Paul, sternly, 'be silent.'

'I have a duty to perform,' said Constantine, defiant in self-defence. 'When a young lady whom you have beguiled into your house is driven by your insolent addresses to escape from it; when she flies to me—a married man—to protect her; throws herself upon my honour and chivalry to ward off your offensive persecutions, then I am only doing my duty as a gentleman when I say to you, Go back the way you came, and trouble her no more. Good heavens! the whole country is ringing with your scandalous conduct; your name is coupled with hers in a way intolerable to the modesty of a virtuous gentlewoman. Everyone laughs and winks, and says an aside behind his hand, when you pass along the road nose in air, hunting the pretty and pious companion.'

'Rock!' exclaimed Paul, his eyes flashing with indignation.

'It is very sanctimonious for you to profess to be shocked when I tell you the truth. You have hoodwinked yourself as well as others. You live in a world of self-delusion, and it is well that I can pluck you out of it and show you the contemptible figure you make, as viewed

from outside. In a fog a sheep is magnified to the size of an elephant, and in the fog you live in nothing bears its proper proportions. You had the temerity when Miss Penhalligan was ill, to force yourself into her room, and make your passes over her face, and press her hand under the pretence of feeling her pulse. When she recovers you take her out on the water, and make a point of rowing behind the rocks where you may be out of sight, and you take the base advantage of being alone with her in the boat, when you know she is unable to escape, and I am not at hand to protect her, to pester her with vulgar and insolent attentions. Bah! Whether you be most fool or rogue I do not pretend to say. I should be sorry to make the analysis of such nasty material. A little of all sorts, made up as a Chinaman makes a picture of a plant with the flower of one stock on the stalk of another, garnished with the leaves of a third.'

'You despicable fellow,' said Paul, with his black brows knit and his eyes flashing wrathfully. 'You are not worthy to be answered by a man of honour. I am ready enough to allow that I am full of fault, and may, unknown to myself, have fallen into follies and error; but I know you now out of your own mouth, the outpouring of your base mind, I know you. I have long dreaded the discovery, and have shrunk from it; now you stand revealed to me in all your vileness. Had I known what a dishonourable, ill-disposed creature you were, I would have struck you with the marlingspike when you clung to the side of my boat, and not have held out a hand to save you. Or, had I saved your life, as I might have that of a dog, I would never have admitted you under my roof, to bring on it grief, and shame, and dishonour.'

Constantine flamed up with rage. He could cast insults at another, but could not endure to hear the truth spoken of himself.

'Cursed be the day!' he exclaimed, 'that ever I came under that roof of yours, that ever I crossed your threshold. From that day I date all my misery. You—you and your sister have made me what I am, an unhappy, tormented man.'

These words of Constantine confirmed the suspicion of Paul. They were the confession of his love for Loveday,

and his alienation from Juliot, his wife. Exasperated to the last degree by this infidelity towards his sister, he uttered a groan of wrath and pain, and raised the ash staff he held, and thrust with it at his brother-in-law, to repel him. The action was hasty; he did not intend to strike him, but to express his horror. The touch of the stick was sufficient to make Constantine blind with fury. He shook Featherstone off, wrenched the staff from his grasp, and struck him with it a blow so violent that Paul staggered back and fell against a stone. He tried to gather himself up; he was deadly pale. A stream of blood poured from his head. He swayed on his knees, put forth his hands to find support, and sank back on the turf.

Then Constantine heard a cry—and in another moment Loveday flew past him, knelt on the ground, and raised Paul in her arms, and strove to staunch his blood with her kerchief.

Constantine stood staring at Paul's white face, and the streaming blood, without stirring, without thinking, frozen with consternation at what he had done.

His rage evaporated, and his fears gained the upper hand. He looked about him. No one was present. None had seen the struggle save Loveday.

Now all was over. The secret must come out. It could be retained no longer. This quarrel with Paul would inevitably lead to his detection.

'What have you done?' cried Loveday. 'Oh, Con! Con! You have killed him, and added one sin to another. Run! Bring me water! Help me to carry him to the house! Oh, Con! I would you had struck and killed me instead.'

Constantine ran to the edge of the cliff, then returned.

'Loveday,' said he, 'there is the boat below in which Paul Featherstone came. I shall take it and be off. I cannot, I dare not remain. Come with me. It will be safer for me if you do; then nothing can be extracted from you to criminate me.'

'Oh, Constantine, run for water! I cannot leave him in this condition, insensible.'

'Let him be—he is not killed, he is hurt, that is all, and when he comes round can practise passes on himself.

It will be an occupation and an amusement. Come along, Loveday! No time is to be lost. The weather is fine, and I will row down the coast till we reach Towan; then we will go together before my father, and ask his forgiveness and favour.'

'I cannot go with you; I have told you that I will not do so. Now, least of all, when Mr. Featherstone is in this condition. Bring me water.'

'How selfish you are, Loveday, you do not think of me. I must get away. I entreat you—as your husband I command you—to accompany me.'

'Constantine, you have forfeited your right to command. When you have recovered my respect again I will submit to your orders, not earlier.'

'There! he is becoming conscious. Come, or I shall believe that you care more for Paul Featherstone than for me.'

'Constantine?' she looked at him with an indignant flash in her dark eyes.

'I am not going to wait and waste valuable time,' said he. 'If you will not come, stay and coddle Paul Featherstone. It will be some time before I send for a disobedient wife.'

Without looking at her again he descended the path to the beach. Carwithen, seeing him, hid behind a rock, fearing his anger. But Constantine had not observed him. He went to the boat, jumped in, and rowed himself away.

'Towan!' he said, 'yes, that is my only chance now. I will return to Towan.'

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE LAST CORD.

Carwithen came up the path in the face of the cliff after Constantine had gone off with the boat. On seeing that Paul Featherstone was hurt, and resting in Loveday's arms, he came to his assistance. Shortly after Thomasine also arrived, and Paul was brought to consciousness, and was sufficiently recovered to stand. He had received a cut in

the back of his head, and had lost a good deal of blood, but there was nothing dangerous in the wound—the skull was not broken.

Loveday had taken the white kerchief from her neck and bound it round his head tightly, and arrested the bleeding.

He signed to Carwithen and his daughter to withdraw, and then he said to Loveday: 'Madam, I shall feel obliged if you will say nothing about a struggle with Mr. Rock, The cut in my head was made by a stone in the ground. against which I fell.'

Loveday bowed her consent. There was an expression of sadness in his eyes as he looked at her that went to her heart.

'Mr. Featherstone,' she said, timidly, 'I pray you not to judge me by appearances. I pray you to be pitiful and forbearing.'

'Madam,' he said, but he paused a long time before he spoke, 'He who is over all knows how anxious, how eager I am to excuse you, but I cannot condone what is unexplained.'

She was silent. He waited for her to speak, but as she said nothing he went on slowly, sadly—'I will go in now to the cottage. Carwithen will attend to me. He can manage so trifling a cut as that I have received. I will return presently, and listen with patience to what you may wish to say, in the hope that you will be able to relieve my mind of a great—— pain.' Then he withdrew.

Loveday was left alone. Her shoulders and neck were uncovered, she had torn off her kerchief for Paul's head. His blood stained the bosom of her gown. There was a little water near the cottage—a land spring, and she washed it thereat. Then she stood on the cliff looking seaward. She saw Constantine's boat, but he was already so far off that she could not distinguish him. She thought over what had taken place, and considered what she could say to Mr. Featherstone—how she could give a colourable explanation of her conduct. She could not account for her presence there satisfactorily. Would he believe that she had found her way to Stanbury by accident? If he were persuaded that this was so, how could she explain the intimacy with Constantine? She saw that to exculpate herself she must

betray him, and, however unworthy he might be, that she could not do. If she had any lingering regard for Constantine after the discovery of his falsehood, he had dispelled it now by his insolence and injustice to Paul Featherstone. For this latter, Loveday had conceived the deepest respect. His simplicity of character, his earnest desire to do what was right and kind, had touched her heart; and the ungenerosity, the ingratitude of Constantine in attacking him, had filled her with horror and repugnance. She had known him to be weak; she now saw his irremediable worthlessness. If he had had any spark of good feeling lingering in his heart he could not have taunted Paul with such words. He was a coward and a scoundrel.

With this discovery her love for him died, as her respect had died. Now he had dragged her into the lowest humiliation. He had left her to bear the shame of being regarded by Paul Featherstone as a woman lost to gratitude and to honour. Rather than that she should be lightly thought of, Constantine would have braved the worst had he possessed a manly spirit. He had preferred to expose her to shame, and escape himself from danger.

In about a quarter of an hour Paul Featherstone came forth from the cottage. Richard Carwithen had patched up the wound in his head with plaster, of which he fortunately had some. Paul came forward to Loveday, who was sitting meditatively on a sand-hill. She rose as he approached. He was very pale—paler than could be accounted for by the amount of blood he had lost.

'Will you permit me,' he said, 'to ask you a few questions, madam?'

She had noticed that he ceased to address her as *Miss* Penhalligan after he had learned that she was a widow. She bowed her head.

'You will allow me to lean on this staff?' he said, kneeling and picking up that with which Constantine had struck him. 'I am shaken by the blow, and shall be glad of the support.'

He shrank from putting the questions to her which he had to put to her.

'I have thought it advisable to ask you a few things—to—to save you much speaking. It will be simpler and better. Carwithen has told me that Mr. Rock is gone. He

took the boat and rowed away in the direction of Bude, not towards Marsland.'

'Mr. Featherstone,' said Loveday, in a low tone, with her hands clasped before her and her eyes on the ground, 'I may tell you this—he is gone for ever. You will see him no more.'

Then she was silent; and he did not speak, but she felt that his eyes were on her face, searching it.

'Why has he gone?'

She was unable to answer.

'Madam,' he said, in a very low tone, and his voice shook as he spoke, 'as I was returning to consciousness I thought I heard his voice addressing you, and asking you to accompany him. And—I heard you refuse?'

'Yes.' She was as white as himself, and she was trembling

He clutched the staff, but his fingers opened and closed and worked nervously on it.

'I would say—— enough,' he continued, after a long pause, 'but that I *must* know something more. I have my sister, my dear sister, to consider.' Then he stopped. He was not strong enough, after the blow and fall and the loss of blood, to proceed rapidly, and every sentence was torn from him with a wrench of pain.

'I would hear further. Did you know him? Was there any attachment to—to him before you came to Marsland?'

'Yes,' very faintly.

'One question more. Is Penhalligan your real name?'

'No.'

Then, involuntarily, a groan escaped him? Loveday looked up with terror. Had he divined the truth? No, he had not.

'Then,' he said slowly, articulating each word distinctly, and each as it issued from his heart cost him a pang, and each as it fell on her ear entered and pierced her brain, 'under a feigned name you made your way into my home, you followed him whom you loved, and who, I suppose, loved you. And then, when he had arranged all, you fled to him, to Stanbury.'

With a cry of despair, putting up her quivering hands, she said, 'No! no!'

'Do not deny it,' he went on, mastering his emotion with an effort which covered his brow with sweat drops. 'You left Marsland, and came direct to Stanbury, where he was awaiting you. Carwithen told me all.'

What would her denial profit her? She raised her hands in speechless agony, put her fingers to her teeth, then let her hands fall again flat on her lap, and her head hung down on her bosom, as if it were a flower-head that had been struck and broken, but not broken off.

'And yet,' said he, 'I have to acknowledge a debt to you. The evening before you departed you behaved honourably to me. When I asked you——'

She raised her hand to stop the words; she could not lift her eyes.

'You dealt with me conscientiously; you refused me. I thank God for that! both because it saved me from a terrible awakening when too late, but also for your own sake, because it shows me that your soul still stirs in response to generous feelings. And again, now, when he asked you to escape with him, the grace of God prevailed: you resisted the voice of the tempter, and——' He could not speak any more. He shook; he was weeping; he was enfeebled by what he had undergone, and unable at this moment to retain the mastery over himself.

At the sound of his broken voice, and the sob that issued from his heart, Loveday's frozen horror and despair gave way. She had been standing. She threw herself before him on her knees, she held up her clasped hands above her head, the tears poured from her eyes, and a storm of passionate weeping choked her words.

'Have patience with me!—Have pity on me!—Do not condemn me!—Oh, do not think so badly of me!—I am not wicked!—I have been weak and have erred!—I beseech you pardon me!—It is not all as you say!—I am not so lost as that!—And you! you! you to cast me out!—You to scorn and reject me!' Then she bowed her face to the coarse sea-grass, and the pink and silver thrift, and the purple sea-lavender; and held her hands with the fingers interlaced tight, as though woven out of wire, over her lips to restrain them from saying more.

'I do not condemn you,' said Paul, calmly. He had recovered his composure, which had left him only for a

moment. 'I should indeed be an unworthy servant of Him who stooped and wrote on the sand when such another was brought before him if I did not pity with an infinite and loving pity instead of condemnation. Far from speaking words of condemnation, I am thanking heaven that you are repentant, and hoping that this is the beginning of a new life. Stand up, I pray you. Do not lie there in the sand. Be composed. We must consider the future.'

She obeyed him mechanically.

He walked away, leaning heavily on the staff, towards the edge of the cliff, and held his hand over his eyes, whilst he looked along the coast towards the south, as trying to see the boat in which Constantine was departing. He stood thus gazing for a long while motionless, but he saw nothing. It may be doubted whether he were in reality straining his eyes to follow the boat and find the direction it was taking. After some time, during which he stood motionless, with his back towards Loveday, he turned and came to her.

'Let us sit down,' he said, with composed voice. 'I am not strong enough to stand long just now. I can speak better, and with less effort, if you will allow me to take my place on this stone.' He did not look at her, fearing lest he should lose control over his voice if he saw her white tear-stained face, and large, entreating, anguish-brimming eyes.

'Madam,' he said, 'between you and me let the past be no more mentioned, or let it be spoken of as little as may be. I shall have to consider my sister, and break to her the news that she has lost her husband. I would spare her unnecessary pain; I would spare her the thought of evil. She must not hear your name associated with that of John Rock, she must have no suspicion that your disappearance is in any way mixed up with his departure. I trust you will suffer me to decide for you what is best. What is best for you is also best for us. You will allow me to rule your course for a little while?'

She bowed for an answer. He did not look at her, but he saw her shadow, and the motion of the shadow assured him of her consent.

'It will be advisable for you to remain here with Tamsin Carwithen, at least for a time.'

She assented, as before.

'You were taken in the storm, drenched to the skin, and were found in a state of exhaustion and unconsciousness by Carwithen, who brought you here. This is what I shall tell Juliot, and what shall be given to the world. It will suffice. Mr. Rock has gone away on business of his own. Has he gone to his home?'

Loveday hesitated to admit this.

'I have never asked him about his home. I understood he had none, and that his past was associated with misfortune. I did not press to know. I saw no need. Now I suspect that I was deceived by his very reticence. If you do not assure me to the contrary, I will assert that he has gone to his home on business of his own.'

Loveday offered no denial.

'What is to follow time will decide. It is very important, madam, for your honour, that you should remain here, and that it be known throughout the neighbourhood that you are here, and that here you should continue for some time after it has become certain that John Rock has departed, never to return. You can understand my motives. I shall be glad that you accept my decision for your own sake, and for that of my sister.'

'It shall be so,' said Loveday.

'That you cannot return to Marsland, you see for yourself. Should Juliot come to you and entreat you to return, you must refuse. You can say, what is true, that your health incapacitates you from being of assistance to her. You can be understood to reside here, to lodge in this cottage with Tamsin Carwithen, till your health is recruited. And now, madam, farewell—for ever. I do not suppose we shall meet again. It is best not.' He stood up. 'Your box, left at Marsland, shall be sent to you here. I believe the arrangement made—or contemplated—was such that a half-yearly notice should be given, and the salary was fixed, though not named. You will allow me to send you what we *owe* you; the notice to leave comes from me. Excuse me entering on these matters now, but, as I may not see you again, I desire to make everything clear. Your box shall be sent over to-day, and with it the sum of money to which you are entitled, together with a little present which you will not, I am sure, pain my sister by refusing.'

'Oh, Mr. Featherstone!' cried Loveday, 'Mr. Featherstone! I cannot, I cannot bear this! I have now lost everything. I am without a mother, without a home, and I have lost my husband, and I have lost my brother. There is one thing to which I clung—your respect; but that also is gone, and yet indeed I do not deserve it.'

'Madam,' answered Paul, 'it is possible that the explanation which would clear your conduct, which is denied to-day, may be afforded in the future. If you can assure me of that, the pity you now command will not be unaccompanied with respect.'

Loveday shook her head sadly. She could give him no hope of such an explanation, at least from her lips. If it came, which she doubted, it would be from Constantine.

'I wish you farewell,' said Paul, sorrowfully, after waiting for a reply. 'We shall probably never meet again.'

He bowed solemnly, and went away. She looked after him with eyes filled with tears. She saw him, when he reached the cottage, unbind *her* kerchief from his head and give it to Tamsin, with a sign that it was to be returned to the owner. But Paul did not look back. Then he took a clean kerchief the daughter of old Carwithen gave him, and that he bound around his head. He would not take away with him any remembrance of Loveday.

She understood his meaning in the action, and it overcame her. She had indeed lost everything—except his pity.

CHAPTER L.

AN APPARITION.

Squire Gaverock, Gerans, and Rose were in the room called the study, in which, however, no study was ever undertaken. They were all dressed in deep mourning. Mrs. Gaverock was dead, and had that day been buried. A stroke had fallen on her shortly after the departure of Loveday, which had greatly affected her, and this was followed by another, from which she did not rally. Her departure had been without pain. She had faded away in sleep. How far the Squire had felt his wife's loss none

could say. He was not accustomed to show his emotion; it is possible that he did not feel much. 'It is, taken all in all,' said he, 'a happy release. She wasn't good for much of late, and no comfort to herself, let alone others. As for the maidens, she'd lost every mite of control over them. I do not know how it is with others; but, for my part, I'd be shot or drowned rather than die soaking in bed, dying by inches. But,' he added, philosophically, 'tastes differ, and there is no accounting for them.'

On this occasion he had a bundle of banknotes before him, and a paper.

'Here,' said the Squire, 'you see what your mother's will was, Gerans. She had her money tied up to her; not much, but something, from eighty to a hundred a year, in the Three per Cents., and one or two other little matters. You see she had left everything to Constantine; but as he is dead she revoked, and by a codicil left all for life to Loveday; and I was to dispose of some shares she had in the Bridgewater Canal at once, and pay over the proceeds to Loveday for her immediate necessities. Here is the money, but where is Loveday? She executed a deed of attorney just before the second fit she had to enable the sale at once, and so it was effected before she died, but I have only got the money to-day. Now it is at Loveday's disposal, if I could find her. All the rest of your mother's money—that is, the money in Consols—will come to you after Loveday's death. It won't go out of the family. I have nothing against what your mother did. Constantine made an ass of himself, and you must suffer. Eighty pounds a year would have been something to you; but, after all, you are well off, more comfortable than ever I was with your mother. She, when squeezed as tight as you could, was not worth quite a hundred, and Rose is worth four without squeezing.'

'Dennis—I mean Mr. Penhalligan,' said Rose, 'has gone to Exeter to make inquiries. Loveday has not written, and nothing has been heard concerning her. When he reached Launceston, he could learn no news; she had spent the night at the King's Arms and gone on by coach next day, but by which coach and whither no one had noticed.'

'How did you hear that?' asked Gerans.

'Mr. Penhalligan wrote to me,' she replied, colouring.

'He knew I was very anxious, and promised to send me news on the first opportunity.'

Gerans nodded. He was not surprised nor suspicious. Nothing more natural than that Rose should desire tidings of her friend and sister-in-law, nothing more proper than that Dennis should report progress.

'My old friend, Ennoder Hocking,' said the Squire, 'when he was dying was asked whether he would prefer to be buried in the old churchyard or in the new cemetery, and he replied that he would certainly prefer the new ground, because it lay on gravel and was healthier, whereas the old graveyard was on clay and a "rheumaticky place." As for myself, I don't care a farthing where I am buried, but I do care how I die. Bless my soul! what inconvenience and expense there is in a death-bed, and how quick and economical is an accident; no long drawn-out sickness for me, if I may have my choice. But this is neither here nor there, only this I will say, Constantine showed his good sense and good taste in going out of this world in the way he did. No nursing, no doctor's bill, no funeral expenses. I hope it will be the same with myself.'

Rose uttered a cry of terror. She was seated facing the window, and she saw a pale face looking in. The others, startled, turned in the same direction, but observed nothing; they asked her what was the occasion of her alarm.

'I thought—I thought!' she said, in trepidation, 'that I saw Gerans out there, looking deathly white. He looked in through the window glass and fixed his eyes on me.'

'That,' said Gerans, 'is impossible, for here I am in the flesh and in the solid, not very pallid, but fresh in colour.'

Even as he spoke the door behind him opened, and framed in the entrance stood Constantine, so like Gerans, but paler, that all who saw him were silent, startled, not knowing what to think—whether they had before them the ghost of Constantine or the 'double' of Gerans.

'Well!' exclaimed Constantine, 'what are you all staring at me for in that mazed manner? Do you take me for a spectre? Not impossible, you have been eager enough to reckon me among the dead; not an effort did you make to discover whether I were alive. Don't you know me again, father? or has disappointment taken the breath out of your lungs? Gerans, here I am to trouble you again.'

'Good heavens!' exclaimed Gerans, springing up, and rushing to his brother with open arms. 'Constantine, old fellow! Is this really you? Oh, my God, how glad I am!' He clasped his hand and shook it, then caught his brother in his arms, and hugged him. 'I am rejoiced! Who ever would have expected this!'

'What, Constantine thrown up by the sea!' exclaimed the Squire. 'Humph! come forward, and let me have a look at you.'

Rose gazed on the restored brother with amazement He was extraordinarily like her husband. Of late Gerans had lost much of his cheerfulness, and this brought him into closer resemblance to the pale, depressed man who stood before them.

'So you are Constantine!' said old Gaverock, without manifesting any exuberant delight at the recognition. 'Always too late for everything. Look here!' He spread out the banknotes on the table. 'Here are four hundred pounds, the proceeds of the sale of the Bridgewater Canal shares; but they are not for you. There are two thousand six hundred in the Three per Cents., but they are not for you. Just returned too late for the plunder!'

'What do you mean, father?' asked Constantine, whilst his eyes rested eagerly, greedily on the money.

'I mean this, that your mother is no more. And as you chose to keep away and sham dead, she has left her money to Loveday instead. And now we do not know what has become of her. You do not, I suppose?'

'I—how should I know?'

His father looked at him from head to foot. He had been in his boat for some time rowing, had not been able to get much to eat, had been wet and exhausted, and had no appearance of prosperity about him.

'Do you see this?' asked old Gaverock. 'Four hundred pounds in notes, and some small gold and silver over. You don't look to me as if you had had the handling of this sort of thing where you have been.'

'No,' laughed Constantine, contemptuously. 'Where I have been I have not fingered much money.'

'I can believe that,' said Gaverock; and he put the notes away in a pocket-book, and the coin in a purse, thrust them into his library table drawer, locked it, and

put the key in his pocket. 'But this might have been yours, had you not been hiding and made us believe you were dead. Now, your best way is to find your wife, and ask her to provide you with a shilling or two for clean linen.'

'Con,' said Gerans, 'look at Rose. She is my wife now, and your sister-in-law.'

Constantine held out his hand, but Rose accepted it without alacrity. His close resemblance to her husband was strange to her.

'You have come from a distance,' she said. 'You are hungry and tired. I will hasten supper.'

'Ah!' said he, 'do so. I have not eaten anything since early morning.'

'Sit down,' said Hender Gaverock, pointing to a chair on the other side of the table. 'Whence come you? From the bottom of the sea? The last I saw of you was on the keel of the "Mermaid," when a sea went over her. What have you been doing with yourself all this time?'

Constantine shrugged his shoulders. 'One thing to-day, something else to-morrow—whatever offered.'

'Why did you not go back to Nankivel? why did you not communicate with us? Why did you let us suppose you dead?'

'Nankivel! I had had enough of a lawyer's office. I did not write, because I had no pleasant news to tell.'

'That you have not done well is no wonder to me. You are not the man to make a fortune.'

'I'm not an eldest son, born with a gold spoon in his mouth, who gets the property and the heiress.'

His father brought his fist down on the table.

'Whose fault is it that you did not get the heiress, Con? Your own—you married a beggar.'

'Father,' interposed Gerans, 'what is the advantage of going back to the past? Con is here, alive—that suffices. He is welcome, and we are rejoiced to see him; if he is unlucky, home is the place for him, where his best friends will endeavour to comfort him. If he had been fortunate, we should have rejoiced. Whether he returns to us prosperous or unfortunate is of little moment, so long as we have him again, risen from the dead.'

'I want to know,' said the old man, rapping on the

table again, 'I want to know what he has been about all this while? It is getting on for two years since he disappeared. What has he been about? Where has he been hiding?'

'I tell you,' answered Constantine, sullenly. 'I have been in various places, trying my hand at various things. If I was picked up by an outward-bound vessel for the West Indies, and went there, and have now come back—what have you to say to that?'

'Your complexion is not tanned enough for the sun of the West Indies,' said old Gaverock.

'That shows you know nothing about the matter. Do you suppose that one can return in six days from the New World, and bring one's tanned skin back? The voyage is long enough to bleach the face; besides, I have been ill.'

'One can see that,' said Gerans. 'Do not be unkind to him, father. Poor Con has been ill, and has suffered. Why, the father in the parable ran to meet his son when he returned, and he was a prodigal. Con has not been that, and you are scarcely gracious to him.'

'Do not you meddle,' said old Gaverock, angrily. 'I know what I am about. It is not for the yellow beaks to instruct the parent birds. I must know all about you, Constantine, before I receive you cordially. The prodigal returned with a confession, and therefore was taken to his father's heart. You come back with evasion and equivocation; therefore I hold you at a distance, with the table between us.'

He continued rapping angrily on the board. His temper was rising. Then he stood up and paced the room with his usual huge strides, with his hands in his pockets. Constantine's eyes followed him. Dusk had set in, and it was becoming dark in the room.

'First of all, you married without my leave, and left me in ignorance of the circumstances; then you were washed off the keel of the "Mermaid," when I, the older by more than double your years, held on. Then you let us suppose you were dead; and so your mother has willed away her money to Loveday, for her own irresponsible, private, and independent use. Then you come home, without a profession, without money, and, of course, want to be helped on to your feet.'

Constantine looked askance at his father.

'Yes,' he said, 'I do want help. I have made up my mind to settle in the West Indies. I will have a sugar plantation there, and negroes to work for me; but land and slaves are not to be had for nothing. I have come home to ask you to assist me, and then I will trouble you no more.'

'Loveday is your wife. She has four hundred pounds. You must settle matters with her. I suppose you intend to take her with you?'

'You tell me that Loveday is lost.'

'Yes, but she will be found. Her brother is gone in search of her. People do not get lost for long in England.'

'I do not intend to take her out with me at first, till I have my estate and house; after that, I will write, or return for her.'

'Well, you must settle matters with her. I can give you nothing.'

'I cannot wait till she is found. I have to be off in a few days. I do not wish to meet Dennis Penhalligan.'

'Why not? Are you a coward?'

'I do not wish to quarrel with him. We nigh came to blows before, and we are sure to come to an angry encounter now if we meet. He is my brother-in-law, and I do not want to hurt him. In a little while all will be right. I shall have my sugar plantation and my negroes, and be a thriving man, with a good house, and Loveday will be with me; and then Dennis may come out and doctor my blacks, if he cannot succeed with white people here. He is inclined to be my enemy now because I am down. But when I am up, he will be amiable enough. No, I will not meet him. Why should you not give me the money, father? Loveday is sure to approve.'

'But supposing she does not, then I shall have to make it up to her. No, no.'

'Then let me have five hundred pounds to start with. I am your son; you are bound to provide for me.'

'Did I not pay a premium to Nankivel for you? Who forfeited that? I have no money to advance. I am always out of pocket. I can't sell without Gerans' consent, and if he consented I would not do it—not reduce the property for you.'

'Why not? I am your son. Why is Gerans to have everything and I nothing?'

'It is your own fault if you have nothing. You were put in a lawyer's office, and on the road to a livelihood, and that opportunity you threw away. I had an heiress for you worth five hundred per annum, and you married Loveday on the sly, and threw that chance away. You were your mother's favourite son and heir to all her money, and you let her suppose you were dead, and so you have lost her money, which has gone to Loveday. Now you are dependent on your wife. Find her, and get her to advance you the five hundred pounds. I will tell you what I think, Constantine. Some men are like skittles, set up to be bowled over. You may set them up a hundred times, and they go over on their sides a hundred and one times. You are one of these. You have no independence of character, no manliness of heart.'

'That is the fatherly reception I get,' sneered Constantine. 'Because I return with empty pockets I am unwelcome; had I come back with a full purse I should have been made much of. I am not the prodigal son of the Gospel who returns snuffling and beseeching forgiveness. I came back to demand my rights, and, by Heavens! I will have them; and, what is more, you'll be eager to give me the money to get me off.'

Old Gaverock went hastily out of the room; he was so angry that he feared an explosion, and he had sufficient sense to avoid that on the night of his lost son's return.

'You must not speak to father in that manner, Con,' cautioned Gerans. 'He is unaccustomed to it, and cannot bear it.'

'Pshaw!' exclaimed Constantine, 'he will have to open his eyes wide before long to what I say, unless—' he went to the locked drawer where the money was—'unless he furnishes me with this.'

CHAPTER LI.

WANTED: MONEY!

'Well,' said Squire Gaverock after breakfast to Constantine, 'what is to become of you?'

Constantine was now dressed in a suit of his elder brother's clothes, and he looked much better than yesterday; he had recovered his colour, and seemed to have filled out. A good sleep after a hearty supper had wrought a great improvement in his appearance. When Rose looked at him, in clothes that her husband usually wore, the resemblance between them was remarkable. The brothers were alike in everything except in the expression of their faces.

'What is to become of me?' asked Constantine. 'That remains for you to decide.'

Gerans was very pleased to have his brother home. He considered him as his natural friend to whom he could open his heart, and confide the trouble that corroded his soul. He showed Constantine the kindliest, most affectionate sympathy, which the latter accepted without thanks, as his right. Gerans lived in clover, whereas he had to shift for himself on the bare world beyond the hedge.

'I will tell you what will become of you,' said old Hender Gaverock; 'you shall remain here till Loveday is heard of, and then you shall settle matters with her. If she chooses to let you have the four hundred, she may, and I will add another hundred, which is the utmost I can do. That will make five hundred pounds. With five hundred pounds you shall go to Barbadoes, or wherever you like; I shall have done with you. You will take your wife with you, or leave her for a year till you are settled. That is the plan. It will do. You shall follow it.'

'I cannot wait till Loveday is found,' answered Constantine.

'Why not? What reasons?'

'I have my reasons.' He looked round. Rose had left the room, only Gerans and his father were there. 'You have your plans, father, and I have mine. I tell you I am

off to-morrow, or the day after at latest. I cannot, and I will not, wait.'

'Why not?

'I have told you. I have my reasons. That must suffice.'

'But it does not suffice.'

'You had better not ask further.'

'But I do ask further.'

'Then you ask in vain.'

'Then you are a worthless vagabond,' said old Gaverock in a rage.

'If I am a vagabond, who has made me so? Who but yourself? All your solicitude has been for Gerans; I have been unconsidered.'

'That is false. You were sent with Nankivel.'

'Yes—when I had not the smallest inclination for a solicitor's office. Of course I am a vagabond. I have no home. I must go over the world looking for one. I have not a house and acres provided for me by my ancestors. They are for Gerans.'

'If you had had a spark of honour in your whole carcass you would not have returned home as you have, after allowing us for two years to believe you dead.'

'If you had had a spark of fatherly feeling in you, you would never have penned me into Nankivel's musty office, with a brick wall to look at, and old parchments to munch. An unnatural father has made a vagabond son.'

Hender Gaverock's face became red as blood, and his eyes sparkled. He grasped Constantine by the collar, dragged him up from his chair, and thrust him down on it again with such violence that the chair gave way, and Constantine fell to the ground.

'I will teach you how a son is to address his father,' said he, and shook his fist at Constantine, who scrambled to his feet with face livid with rage and mortification.

'I have been treated with only violence and insult by you,' said Constantine. 'I ask you for money now, that I may depart out of your sight, never to appear before you again, and have it I will.'

'You will!—how?'

'Father,' interposed Gerans, 'what can be the harm of granting him what he desires? He has his reasons, which

are no doubt good, that make it necessary for him to leave immediately, and he wants the money at once. A penny now is worth twopence ten minutes hence. Con has told you that he cannot wait.'

'He has had his deserts.'

'No, he has not,' answered Gerans, boldly; 'you are doing him an injustice.'

'I—an injustice!' The old man flamed up, and Constantine laughed.

'I ask for five hundred pounds. The sum is moderate. I forewarn you, if you do not give me the money willingly, I will make you give it,' said Constantine.

'You! You make me!'

'Yes, I will. If I were to ask for a thousand you would give it with gladness to be rid of me.'

'I should like to see the force you will wield against me, to make me pay money which I do not choose to expend.'

'Do you remember when I last came here, you tripped me up, father?'

Old Gaverock nodded.

'It is my turn now, and such a fall I will give you as you never experienced before.'

'Con,' interposed Gerans, 'why do you aggravate father? You can gain nothing by doing so, and your manner is offensive, as your conduct is improper.'

'Leave me to settle my affairs,' answered Constantine, impatiently. 'My father will not give me the money. Is it so?'

'Yes, it is so,' answered Gaverock.

'I will make him do it, with the threat of dishonour on himself, the family, and the name of Gaverock.'

'What! what!'

'Ah! that is my weapon. I must tell you the truth. I have got into a scrape. It was no fault of mine, but let that pass. I am now in danger of arrest and of conviction as a felon, and of transportation.'

The old man uttered a hoarse cry. Like a madman he rushed upon Constantine, who turned pale and started back, and armed himself with a leg of the broken chair. Gerans threw himself between them, laid hold of the furious old man, grappled with and restrained and overpowered him, and thrust him back.

'Gerans!' gasped the old Squire, 'Gerans!' He ceased to resist, and his son let go his hold. The old man panted for breath. Gerans also breathed hard and fast. He was astonished at himself for daring to oppose and control his father, and he cast down his eyes before him, as one that was guilty. He turned aside to his brother, and said, reproachfully, 'Con, you should not say false and idle words certain to anger our father. You know how sacred he holds the honour and name of the family.'

'I spoke nothing but the ugly truth.' said Constantine.

'That,' answered Gerans, 'I will never believe. You are the cleverest and best of us two. I might bungle into wrongdoing, but not you. You have twice as much brains as I.'

'The world is for the brainless, then,' mocked Constantine. 'Towan estate, and an heiress with four hundred a year. I—the clever one of the family—am a vagabond who sues in vain for a few hundreds.'

The old man stood looking from one son to the other without speaking, hardly knowing with which to be most angry.

'Father,' said Gerans, approaching old Hender; but the Squire would accept no submission—he thrust him away with violence, and a smothered oath.

Gerans gave his brother a sign to leave the house, and Constantine threw aside the leg of the chair which he had taken up as a weapon wherewith to defend himself, and went out at the porch door. In another moment Gerans followed him. They walked on together in silence for some distance over the downs towards the sea.

Presently Constantine asked, 'Have you seen mother's will?'

'Yes—that is, I have heard it read.'

'I must have a look at it. I believe it may be upset. She left the money to Loveday conditionally on my death.'

'You need not trouble yourself about that. Loveday gets the money, and she is your wife. It is all the same.'

'It is not all the same. I want the money at once. I cannot wait for it till she is found and can give her consent. I am not sure that she will consent without conditions. How much have you got with Rose?'

'I do not know. I have not looked into matters.'

'I suppose that now her affairs are out of father's hands and in yours. He was her trustee only whilst she was under age and unmarried.'

'I do not know.'

'You can raise money, I presume, independently of his consent?'

'I do not know.'

Constantine laughed contemptuously. 'You do not deserve to have money, if you do not know on what tenure you have it, what is its amount, whether you can dispose of it, whether you can control it.'

'I have had no occasion,' answered Gerans. 'Father is an excellent manager. An agent at Truro manages for Rose; and when that property is sold, we shall buy Dinabole and other land round here so as to have all the estates together within a ring fence. That is father's plan, and I approve of it. Rose does not want to have the house at Kenwyn sold in which she was born and lived, and if my father insists on that I shall oppose him, but that is the sole point on which any difference is likely to arise. He aims only at doing the best for Rose and me. She knows that as surely as myself, and we are content to trust him.'

'I would trust no one but myself,' said Constantine. 'However, I am not here to talk over your plans of rising to be a big county squire and possibly a high sheriff; your affairs concern me now only as they touch me. My necessities are urgent. What I said is true. I will give no particulars. I am under a cloud, and must leave the country. I have been drawn into a horrible quagmire, from which I must scramble before I am sucked down into the depth. The money I must have, or in very spite, to revenge myself on father, I will let the worst come, and then he will go mad with shame and rage and vexation that he did not come to my terms in time.'

'Constantine! I cannot, I will not, believe that you have done anything dishonourable.'

'No—the wrongdoing has been forced on me. You say I have brains. I am easy-going and good-natured. Easy-going and good-natured folk get imposed on. I was imposed on by a hypocritical, pious idiot—and he has led me into such a trouble that unless I escape out of the country

at once, of my own accord, I shall be transported out of it, at the cost of the country.'

'Oh, Con!'

'What help to me is there in your reproachful Constantines! and Oh, Cons! I want—not exclamations of righteous or simulated horror, but ready money. In my opinion it is they who lay pitfalls for the unwary who should be punished, not those who fall into them. It is all very well for you to stick to the high road of virtue, because you have no temptations to leave it; you are an eldest son and married to an heiress, but I am nothing and have nothing. I have to get what I can, make a nest like a puffin in a disused rabbit burrow, or catch a meal like a skua from the gulls when they return from fishing by striking them in the breast, making them disgorge, and catching and rushing off with their prey.'

'Brother, this is very dreadful!'

'Of course it is. So is a torn coat, but a tailor will not mend it by holding up his hands over the rent. He must take needle and thread and draw the riven edges together. I want money.'

'What have you done, Con?' asked Gerans, with sinking heart.

'Never mind what I have done. The thing that we have to consider is, what is to be done with me. What do you consider is the thing to be done with a cankered apple-tree in your garden? You get rid of it as quickly as you can, lest the canker spread. I am the cankered tree. You must get rid of me. Mind you, Gerans, it is the soil that produces the canker; the tree is good enough, and the best sorts of apples take the canker readiest. Your sour cider fruit never catch it. I have not been given proper nourishing soil in which my roots may spread, so I have got the canker. You must get rid of me, send me to the West Indies. There I shall recover and bear bigger and better apples than even you with your Towan and your heiress.'

'Have you been, really, in the West Indies, Con?'

'Never mind where I have been. Again your questions are irrelevant. I can assure you I have been in a new world to this, with quite a different order of ideas, and habits, and manners from those of the old world ruled by the Squire of Towan. Where I am going, not where I

have been, is that to occupy us at present, and that I do not mind telling you. I am going out of the kingdom, to the West Indies, and I am going as quickly as I can to prevent being sent east to Botany Bay.'

'I cannot believe this.'

'What? That I am in danger? You will have to arrive at conviction pretty sharply, or the danger will be at your door in the shape of a couple of sheriff's officers to arrest me. I will not wait here much longer. I have some patience with your sluggish minds, which require time to take in new notions, but I will not protract the time indefinitely. Money I want, and will have. Five hundred pounds. If you will give me some of your own—that is, Rose's—or if father will give me Loveday's, it is one to me. The money I must have, and do not so much care out of whose pocket it proceeds so long as it finds its way into mine. If you advance me the money, I will repay it at five per cent. interest out of my sugar canes. If I have Loveday's, she of course will join me, and suck the sugar on the spot out of the canes grown on her gold.'

'You must give me time to think this over,' said Gerans. 'If you must have money, you shall have it. Whatever is mine, personally, I will freely share with you, but I cannot take Rose's money without her consent, nor can my father give you the four hundred pounds left to Loveday without her consent. But, Con! that you have been unfortunate I know; that you have been guilty, I cannot and will not believe.'

'You have said that already, and I am glad of your good opinion. As you say, I am unfortunate; but the self-righteous world will say I was something else. Well! when I am on my sugar plantation whacking my negroes, I shall whistle across the ocean in the face of this rotten, canting, hypocritical old world. When I am wealthy I will come back, and it will bow low before me and do worship. You will see! You will see!' He laughed carelessly. 'Gerans, I must have some of the mignonette seed from under the drawing-room window. I am passionately fond of the scent of mignonette, and the hot sun of the West Indies will draw it out in double fragrance. Do you remember the butter-scotch we were wont to make together, Gerans? and how little sugar mother would spare?

You will come out and pay me a visit on our plantation, and we will make butter-scotch out of my own sugar, grown on the estate.' Then Constantine threw himself down on the short grass. 'I am going no further with you, Gerans,' he said. 'I have a fit of laziness on me, and I will lie and dream here of my sugar plantation. You go on and find out how the money is to be raised for purchasing it.'

CHAPTER LII.

ON THE TURF.

Constantine lay on the turf, picking up little empty white shell cases which strewed it, and crushing them between his fingers. There was not much sport in this proceeding, but it was a distraction. Towan was on his left; from where he lay he overlooked the house. When he was tired of cracking shells he raised his head on his right hand, put a stalk of thrift in his mouth, and tried to tie a knot in it with his tongue. His eyes rested on Towan, without any emotion at seeing the home of his childhood again, at the prospect of seeing it now for the last time.

'If I get to the West Indies I shall not be such a fool as to return home to my father's growls, and my brother's exclamations of Oh, Con!'

His heart was bitter within him at the thought that his brother was well provided for, happily married, exposed to none of the roughs of life, whilst he had to shift for his living, run into, and succumb to temptations. He stood now in peril of transportation, simply because he was a younger son. Gerans was respected as an honourable, just, and generous man, solely because he was the firstborn, and as firstborn had everything showered on him for which another must fight. He was angry with Gerans, because he envied his luck. He was angry with his father, because his father was partial. He was angry even with his dead mother, because she had put him to inconvenience by her will, making him subservient to his wife, to whom he did not want to owe an obligation just then. The reception he had met with from his father had not been cordial. He did not stop to inquire whether he deserved a better

reception, after showing so little regard for the feelings of his parents as to leave them for nearly two years in ignorance that he was alive. He had returned home, not that home now exercised any attractive spell on his heart, not to see again his old father and mother, and the brother who loved him with such sincerity, but because he wanted money, and knew not whither he should turn for it beside home. Nevertheless a soft emotion had risen in his heart on the yester eve when he came up from the strand, and saw before him the old walls and roofs, and his hand had trembled on the door latch before he pressed it, out of real feeling. But that was transient, and had given way to bitterness and discontent. He was ashamed of the momentary melting, as of a weakness. Even his brother's hearty welcome could not rethaw his frozen heart. He thought of him only as one who stood between him and an easy life.

'There is no saying,' said Constantine, spitting the stalk of thrift from his mouth; 'Gerans may be dissembling, and be only eager how to be rid of me cheaply. It is as well that I have no great tenderness towards him. We shall be better able to deal with one another in business-like fashion.'

Lying on the turf and looking towards Towan, he saw the old Squire ride away on his favourite cob. Constantine knew it well. 'Whither is he going?' he asked, and then remembered the day was that of market at Padstow, and the Squire never missed attending.

'It is nothing to him that I am here,' sneered Constantine. 'He is off to learn the price of bullocks and sheep.'

He was wrong in his conjecture. Squire Gaverock was not on his way to Padstow without thought of his son. He was on his way thither to see about raising a hundred pounds for Constantine. He had made up his mind to give him that; more he could not, without selling land, and the idea of selling did not enter his head. 'With a hundred pounds from me, and Loveday's four hundred, and her eighty pound per annum from the Three per Cents.—it is enough. He must be satisfied. If he has to ask his wife for the money, so much the better; it will make him behave to her with kindness and respect.' Jog, jog, jog! 'After all,' mused the Squire, 'I was a bit sharp with the boy, but he made me angry. Why did he not write and let us know

he was alive, and not make his mother miserable?' Jog, jog, jog! 'I don't like his looks. There is a skulking, hang-dog expression in his face which it did not wear in old times.'

Constantine's eyes followed his father along the Padstow road without love. He was thinking of the four hundred pounds in the old man's table drawer. That money was his own by rights. His mother had left it to Loveday only because she believed her son Constantine was dead. Morally, if not legally, the money was his. If he could get hold of that money, he would be able to settle in the West Indies, and with some assiduity and determination, and by keeping the negroes up to their work with a cat-o'-nine-tails, make a large fortune. There was no doubt about that, as there was also no doubt that it would be idle for him to go to Barbadoes or anywhere else without capital. 'I am going to be a master, not a slave,' said Constantine.

Presently he saw Rose come out of the house and enter the walled garden, carrying a basket. She left the garden door open—it was too much trouble to shut it. She went among the raspberry bushes, and began picking the fruit. Constantine thought, though too far off to be certain, that she put quite as many berries into her mouth as into the basket. In fact she did so. She had gone into the garden to pick for a raspberry pudding. Rose had the keys of the store-room, and ate the currants and raisins, and figs, and almonds there whenever she went to the room. She helped herself, not because she was greedy, but because she liked sweet things, and liked having something in her mouth to play with, and she never denied herself any fancy. So—she liked to see and talk to, and coquet with Dennis Penhalligan, and notwithstanding his impertinence at the well she met him and conversed with him, and allowed him to compliment her, and take her hand. It was a pastime, and no harm was meant.

Constantine was so intent watching Rose, and laughing at the motion of her hand to her lips instead of to the basket, that he did not observe the approach of a man from Nantsillan, till he was close at hand—and then he started as he recognised Dennis. The young doctor did not go to the house, but walked to the garden door. Perhaps he

judged by the door being left open who was within. Perhaps as he went by he caught a glimpse of Rose in her morning gown. Constantine was interested and alarmed. He wished he were near enough to overhear their conversation. He considered whether, if he crept down to the garden wall, he could catch any of it, but he abandoned the thought of doing this; the wall was high, and of brick. From where he was, he could see what passed; behind the wall, he would be able neither to see nor to hear.

He saw Rose start with surprise, and take a step eagerly forwards to meet Dennis, then she extended her hand to him, and Penhalligan took and held it for some while.

'Humph!' said Constantine, 'on uncommonly friendly terms. To be sure he is her brother-in-law twice removed.'

At last Rose drew her hand hastily away, and began to pick raspberries rapidly. They seemed to have much to say to each other. Constantine looked anxiously. He wondered whether Dennis had obtained a clue to where his sister was. He wondered whether Rose was telling Dennis that he, Constantine, was there. Constantine thought that if Penhalligan made a motion of surprise, he would detect it, and that would assure him that the surgeon had been made aware of the reappearance of his brother-in-law, long supposed to be drowned. But look as closely as he could, Constantine could detect no such movement. They had other matter to talk about, much more interesting than himself, thought Constantine and laughed, 'And Gerans, the soft-headed, there is no thought of him either, I suppose.'

Just then he saw, but only for a moment, an odd figure of a man in a red waistcoat, that peeped from beneath an oilskin coat, standing in the garden doorway, and at the same time a white spotted dog ran up and down between the raspberry bushes.

The moment Penhalligan saw the dog, he ceased speaking to Rose; he seemed to become excited and angry; he ran after the dog, threw stones at it, and—all at once, Constantine could see neither it nor the red-vested man any more. He supposed that the man had gone along under the wall towards the house, and the dog had left the garden, and followed him. The spotted dog had, however, effectually interrupted the interview. Dennis Penhalligan said a few more words to Rose, and then hastily left the garden

and returned to Nantsillan. Then Constantine observed that Rose stood by the bushes with her forefinger to her lips in a deep study ; she neither ate nor put into the basket any more raspberries.

If he had been near enough to hear the conversation, he would have been greatly relieved of his anxieties. In the first place he would have learned that Dennis had not come upon the traces of his sister, and that he was altogether following a misleading clue. Penhalligan had assumed that Loveday had gone to Exeter, and he had made that the point of departure for his inquiries. It is true that Madam Loveys had mentioned to him the advertisement, but he argued that if his sister had taken the situation she would certainly have written, whereas it was much more probable that she had found her cousin and was with her. Her cousin was in money difficulties and did not want her address to be known, and had persuaded Loveday not to write to her friends. Consequently Dennis was trying to find out his cousin with the anticipation of discovering Loveday with her. He had returned home unsuccessful, to make some arrangements about his business, intending to leave again after a few days. In the second place Constantine would have learned that Rose had not betrayed the fact of his being alive and at Towan. The spotted dog had disturbed the conversation and interrupted the current of her thoughts when she was on the point of making the communication to Dennis. Constantine thought that there was something suspicious in this meeting of Rose with Dennis. It was by appointment. The door had been left open purposely. That was his conclusion. 'Well,' said he, 'I can make some use of it, I dare say.'

Gerans had laughed at him half-an-hour ago for picking up a crooked nail on the road, and asked him what use it could be to him. Then he had replied that it would come handy somehow, and some day. Why was it that Constantine was prepared to lay hold of anything, however crooked, and turn it to his own purposes ? of anything that chance cast in his way, and convert it into a weapon wherewith to wound his fellow-men ?

'Because,' he would answer, 'I am a younger son.'

Constantine had good abilities, better than Gerans ; he had the same lazy good-nature as his brother, a love of

taking things easily, but circumstances were against him, and for Gerans. He had not a fortune to fall back upon. He could not take life easily, he must work to get a living, and he was angry because of this obligation. Why should he, and not Gerans, have to work ?

The day was warm, the sun had heated the sandy soil of the turf on which he lay. He had nothing to do but grumble over the injustice with which he had been treated and find palliations for his own ill-doing. He was tired of lying with his head propped on one elbow, so he threw himself back, put his hands under his head, drew his hat over his face, and went to sleep.

When Gerans came back, he found his brother where he had left him, sleeping and snoring.

Gerans had been thinking since he parted from Constantine. He had not forgotten the reproaches of Rose because he gave way to his father so readily, but he would not oppose the old man without a better reason than to show that he had an independent opinion. Rose was indifferent as to the occasion of a passage of arms, in her eagerness to have a battle in which her husband would measure his strength with his father. Gerans was essentially a peace-loving man, and a just man. He would yield in matters unimportant to ensure peace, and he would not oppose his father in matters where his father, he knew, was in the right. He was aware that his yielding to his father had lost him the respect and love of his wife ; now the occasion had come in which he would have to take a decided line of opposition. He might not thereby recover his wife's regard, but he would be doing a justice to his brother.

He had a notion that Towan estates were worth in the gross about twelve hundred a year—that is, when all outs were paid, about eight hundred—but he was not sure ; his father neither told him the value, nor consulted him about the burdens. There was a mortgage on it he knew for his aunt's jointure, but to what amount he was unaware. There were continual repairs being executed to the farm buildings and cottages, but at what annual cost he was not told. The only way by which he had obtained an inkling into the amount of his father's income was through the rate-book which the parish overseer had shown him one

day. Whether there were other charges on the estate than the mortgage for Madam Loveys he did not know. What the cost of the maintenance of the Towan establishment was he was unable to conjecture.

His father kept no accounts.

Gerans waited by his brother's side till Constantine awoke. The latter sat up, rubbed his eyes, and asked how long he had been asleep.

'Con,' said Gerans, 'I have thought over what is to be done. When I was married no resettlement of the property was made. Time enough when a boy is born, said father. Consequently, he and I can do with it pretty much what we will. It is of no use asking him to do too much —we must be moderate in our demands—now; if, after my father's death, I can help you further, and you need assistance, command me. At present I am powerless without his consent. I have resolved to ask him to raise a thousand pounds for you on Towan. Then, with Loveday's four hundred in cash, you will have something to start with, and she will have mother's two thousand six hundred in the Three per Cents.'

'Do you mean this?' asked Constantine, with pleased but incredulous surprise.

'I do, indeed,' answered Gerans. 'You are my brother. Here is my hand, old fellow—is it a compact? I would do more for you if I could.'

Constantine walked on at the side of his brother towards Towan.

'You see, Con, that if I should have no son, the property would come to you. So if you go out of the country, you must not leave us without tidings of you. Towan nearly came to change of heirs the other day when I was samphire-picking for Rose. Penhalligan saved my life.'

Constantine laughed.

There was something unpleasant in the tone of his laugh—a significant innuendo—which jarred with Gerans, and he looked at his brother.

'I have been witness to-day to a meeting,' said Constantine. 'Rose was in the garden picking raspberries when Dennis Penhalligan came to her.'

'Dennis back!' exclaimed Gerans, with glad surprise; 'then he has tidings of Loveday.'

'Possibly,' answered Constantine; 'I was not so unpolite as to run down and form a third in the party.' He spoke mockingly, and Gerans looked at him again, indignantly, whilst the colour rushed to his face. But he was without suspicion of Rose, without jealousy of Dennis; he flushed with indignation at Constantine for reflecting on his wife's proceedings with disparagement. He said nothing more till they reached the house.

CHAPTER LIII.

A THOUSAND POUNDS.

When Gerans and Constantine entered Towan, the former said to Rose, 'What news of Loveday? I hear from Con that you have seen Dennis.'

'Met him between the raspberry bushes in the garden,' said Constantine.

Rose looked sharply at her brother-in-law; there was a smirk on his lips and a twinkle in his eye which angered her. She knit her brows, turned her back on him, and answered in a voice tremulous with shame and annoyance, 'No news at all.' Then she went with quick steps towards the door.

'Stay a while,' spoke Constantine; 'I don't want Penhalligan or, indeed, any one outside Towan to know of my presence here. Will you be good enough to keep my return a secret till my back is turned, which will be as quickly as possible. I shall be obliged if you will silence the servants.'

'I cannot answer for them,' replied Rose. 'Why you should be ashamed to be seen, unless you have done what is discreditable, I do not understand.'

'I explained my reasons to my father and your husband this morning,' said Constantine, coolly; 'as for the servants, their tongues can be tied. Promise them each a crown, if my return be kept secret till this day week.'

Rose made no answer. She went out of the room without another word. She was angry with Constantine and with herself, perhaps a little frightened at the consequences of her inconsiderate conduct. Not a word had passed between her and Dennis to which Gerans might not

have listened. Their conversation had been about Loveday, in whose welfare Gerans was as much interested as herself. Dennis had acted, perhaps, injudiciously in coming to her into the garden instead of going to the house, and she had also, perhaps, been unwise in inviting him to come to Towan that evening to see her and Gerans, and tell them his plans for the prosecution of the search. Penhalligan was reluctant to enter Towan after his quarrel with the old Squire. Mr. Gaverock had not quite forgotten and forgiven the young surgeon for calling him a bear, though he professed to be content with the explanation given by Loveday. Dennis had not apologised, and had not withdrawn the expression. Therefore he treated him with coldness, and Dennis would not cross the threshold unless called in professionally, or specially invited. He had been summoned to Mrs. Gaverock when she was taken with paralysis, but specially invited he had not been till Rose asked him in the garden. She had intimated to him that she had something particular to tell him. She had told him nothing about Mrs. Gaverock's will, nor of the return of Constantine. Now she thought that if she had been guilty of an indiscretion, she would soon put that to rights. She wrote a note :

'Dear Mr. Penhalligan,—Pray do not come up *this* evening, as I asked you.—Yours very sincerely,

'Rose Gaverock.'

She sent the note down to Nantsillan by the postman, who arrived just then, a poor man nearly deaf. Then her mind was relieved. She had done nothing wrong, nothing wherewith to reproach herself.

Constantine and Gerans were in the hall, the latter turning over the letters. The former was at the window.

'Do you employ the postman for carrying messages?' asked he.

'Yes, sometimes,' answered Gerans, with indifference.

'Because I see Rose outside slipping a triangular note into his hand.'

'Very possibly,' Gerans answered shortly ; he was hurt and offended at his brother's tone and words.

'Rose,' said he, when his wife came in, 'have you been giving old Hockaday a note?'

'Yes,' she answered.

'To whom?'

'A friend,' she replied, shortly, and left the room.

Constantine laughed.

'She will not be taken to task by you,' he said.

'I did wrong to take her to task,' answered Gerans, sadly, 'I was wanting in good feeling, and she replied to me as I deserved.'

'The wife of Cæsar is above suspicion!' sneered Constantine.

'In every way,' answered Gerans, sharply, 'as gold is untarnishable, because the element of canker is not in it. The cloud covers the mirror from the breath of him who approaches it, the mirror itself is clear.'

Constantine shrugged his shoulders.

'Have you a white liver-spotted dog?' he asked.

'No.'

'Pshaw! because I have seen one about Towan to-day.'

'We have no such dog.'

In the evening Squire Gaverock returned from Padstow. He went into the study where his sons and Rose were seated awaiting him. Since the last sickness and death of Mrs. Gaverock the drawing-room had been deserted by Rose, and she preferred to sit in the library or hall; the former was the snugger room. Old Gaverock was little there. He used the apartment as his office. His box of deeds was there, his desk and money were there, his letters were there, his whips, and guns, and spurs.

He had ridden off his anger, and returned in good-humour.

'Rose,' said he, 'the Kenwyn mine is sold, and the money is in the banker's hands at Padstow. Never had so much gold and notes at my disposal before. I am going to see Tregellas to-morrow about the purchase of Trevithick.'

'I have no objection to the sale of the mine,' answered Rose, 'but I will not have my house at Kenwyn disposed of.'

'I have not said I will sell that,' said the old man, roughly. 'Don't screech before you are pinched.'

'What did you sell the mine for?' asked Constantine.

'For more money than you will ever get, sitting in the corner, twiddling your thumbs. I sold for two thousand five hundred and eighty pounds. Five years ago it would have sold for six thousand.'

Rose was sitting in the window, embroidering the border for the carpet she had promised to Loveday, on which she had been so long engaged.

'Is that money mine now?'

'No, my dear,' answered the Squire; 'I am your trustee and shall invest it for you. You are not to be entrusted with large sums to play ducks and drakes with.'

'Father,' said Gerans, 'I have been considering to-day what is to be done for my brother. You have kept me always in the dark as to the value of this estate, but I can form a rough estimate of what it is worth. There is enough to keep Rose and me here in comfort, and we do not ask for luxuries. The estate has not been re-entailed on my marriage, and therefore you or I can sell or mortgage with mutual consent. It is my wish that Constantine be given a thousand pounds at once, to enable him to buy an estate in the West Indies.'

He spoke quietly and firmly.

Old Gaverock's eyebrows went up to the roots of his hair as he listened to his eldest son.

'A hundred pounds,' he said; 'here it is. I have raised it this day at Padstow by note of hand. Here it is in gold and paper.' He pulled a purse out of his trousers pocket, and a book out of the breast pocket of his coat. Then he unlocked his drawer, and threw in purse and book. 'There,' he said, 'there is the hundred pounds I promised. He can have four hundred from Loveday when he finds her. He shall have no more.' He slammed the drawer and locked it.

'A hundred pounds is insufficient,' said Gerans. 'My mother's money is his and Loveday's, quite independently of what I wish Constantine to have out of the property.'

'You—you wish it!' echoed old Gaverock in too much amazement to boil up with wrath.

Rose put down her needle, and turned her face towards her husband. She was surprised at his audacity.

'Yes,' said Gerans, unabashed; 'I have made up my mind to that sum. You cannot raise money on the estate

without my consent, and I cannot raise any without yours.'

'I know all that better than you.'

'Well, father, I wish that justice should be done to Constantine. It is not fair that I should have everything, and he nothing.'

'He will have his mother's fortune—through his wife. If he does not have it directly, whose fault is that but his own, because he allowed her to suppose him dead.'

'That is not sufficient. Besides, he is in immediate need of a large sum of money. He is confident of success in the New World if he lands on it with good capital to dispose of. The least that I can think of letting him have is one thousand pounds.'

'Pray how is that to be raked out of the ground? Are you going to open a cairn, expecting to find a pot of gold?'

'We will mortgage a portion of the estate to raise it.'

'No, thank you. It is well you say we. You luckily cannot do this without my consent, and that shall never be given. I will not allow the property to be farther encumbered. I have had trouble enough with the burdens on it. I only shook off some with the aid of money I had with your mother.'

'Very well,' said Gerans. 'If the property was cleared with her money, let the money be paid to her son Constantine out of it. A thousand pounds, I ask for no more.'

'A hundred!' roared old Gaverock.

'A thousand!' replied Gerans, determinedly.

Rose, sitting at the window, listened with growing surprise. The man who had yielded to his father unquestioningly in everything hitherto, was now showing him a very determined front. What a transformation was effected in the submissive, pliable Gerans, who had been ready to slip into a mouse hole before his father's wrath till now! What occasioned this change? Surely the love he bore to his brother steeled him to defy the anger of the old tyrant. How little love must he have felt for her, if he had not once stood up in her defence against the Squire! He was bold in his brother's behalf, timorous in hers. She was not worth enough in his eyes to make him measure his strength with his father, in spite of all she had said to

urge him. His opposition to old Gaverock now, instead of pleasing her, aroused her resentment. There was another man who loved her with so fierce a love that he had taken her part in a trifling matter such as the mounting of Phœbus, even when he knew she was in the wrong. How he had held her hand that day, what fire had flickered in his eyes as he looked at her, how his voice had quivered with passion when he addressed her, suppressed, but suppressed with a terrible effort, because he knew that she would be offended if he gave it vent! Gerans was not even jealous of Penhalligan's admiration and devotion. He had accepted Constantine's hint about the conversation in the garden, and had received the news that she sent private notes by the postman, without surprise and anger. He did not really love her. He had married her only because he was an obedient boy, and had been ordered to do so by his father. She recalled the drive to Wadebridge and the proposal of Gerans, his chin in a white woollen muffler, and his spotted pocketHandkerchief to his nose. Then there rose up before her eyes the scene on the road when Dennis told her of his love. She uttered a faint cry. Outside the window was Dennis, leaning against a side wall, looking at her through the glass. None of the rest could see him; she saw his burning eyes fixed on her, saw the heaving of his breast, saw his hands convulsively clenched on his bosom, saw how white and agonised was his face.

None in the room had heard her exclamation. Old Gaverock was storming against Gerans. He had worked himself up into fury. Constantine sat in a corner, biting his nails, watching his father; Gerans, pale but firm, sat opposite the old man, listening to him, waiting till the storm was overpast. None of the three had attention to bestow on her. She made a sign to Dennis, waving her hand, a sign of entreaty that he would go away; but he would not obey. She looked at him beseechingly, and again waved her hand. What a proof of love was this in poor Penhalligan, that in spite of her commands he would come, if only to get a glimpse of her face through a window! She was alarmed, however, at his remaining outside. She stuck her needle into the canvas, and began to roll it up; she intended to leave the room, go outside and entreat Dennis to depart. Just then the door opened, and the

servant came in with candles. Rose started up and drew the blinds across the window. She was afraid of the girl seeing outside the face of Dennis. When the lights were brought in the Squire ceased to speak, and waited till the servant left.

Rose's attention had been distracted from the altercation by Dennis's appearance. Now that the curtains were drawn, and he could not see her, he would go away. She leaned her head on her hand and watched Gerans. His resolution would fail, she was sure. He made a little show of resistance, and then would give way. The storm was broken loose, and he would strike sail and run before it. But Gerans did not strike sail as she supposed. He did not budge from the ground he had taken up. She listened to him when he spoke, and was fain to allow that he was right in what he advanced. He was firm and temperate, but his cheeks glowed, and his eyes flashed.

'Father,' said he at last, 'the property will be mine eventually, and I will bear the loss, not you. I am not only ready but eager to make the sacrifice, because I consider it just.'

'You dare to charge me with injustice!'

'I deny that you have treated Con with the liberality that he has a right to expect of you. You should not require any urging from me to do an act of justice.'

'I am not responsible to you,' shouted the old man. 'Golly! if I had spoken to my father in the manner you have addressed me, he would have knocked me down. I will not give him a penny over a hundred pounds.'

Constantine stood up and left the room. Impotent rage boiled in his heart. He could not remain in his father's presence, and constrain himself. He must go out and cool his heated face, and leave the calmer Gerans to manage for him.

When he was gone, his brother said in a softer tone than heretofore, 'Father, it is not fair that Con should be placed completely dependent on his wife. My mother never intended that. Right is right. My dear mother wished to leave Con her money. You have yourself told me that some of her money was sunk in the property.'

'That was years ago—she has not mentioned that in her will.'

'I know what her wishes were—that all she had, and all she ever had had, should go to Con. I will not accept the freedom bought by her money. Poor Con has had much trouble, has gone through great privations, I fear he has got into some difficulties—I hope he exaggerates their extent. I cannot hold up my head and look an honest man in the eyes, unless I can feel that justice has been done him, and that the wishes of my dear mother have been carried out.' As he spoke his eyes moistened, and his tone became soft and pleading.

'I have had a quiet and comfortable home, and Con has had none at all. I have had plenty, and he has had poverty. I have my position secured to me, and he has a position to gain. I cannot enjoy an easy hour if I know that he has been thrust forth to hunger and hardship. It must not be so! Father, your own heart will tell what I say is right. Give him the thousand pounds at once. You say you have got money in the bank.'

'That is not mine—it is Rose's.'

'Very well. Let us mortgage one of the farms to Rose, and raise on it the sum I want. Rose!' he said, turning sharply towards her, 'Rose! you will consent to that, will you not?'

'Yes, Gerans, heartily!'

'There! there!' he exclaimed, almost with a shout of triumph, 'see what a good, true, noble wife Rose is. God bless you, Rose, for that word.'

'Rose has nothing to do with it,' said old Gaverock. 'Her consent is nothing. I am her trustee, and I will not allow it. What is that?'

Rose was weeping. Why? She did not know, herself.

CHAPTER LIV.

THE SPOTTED DOG.

The letter received by Dennis from Rose had not had the effect on him she intended. The tone of the note was more than friendly. What did she mean by it? Was it a confession of her own weakness, and dread of seeing him again? Or did she hint that he was not to come openly to the door

and ask for admission? He had no rest at home. As the evening closed in, and silvery twilight filled the sky, he was irresistibly drawn to Towan. The moor was silent and solitary. He approached the house stealthily. He looked at the garden door. It was not open, it was not ajar. Then he thought he observed the face of Rose at a window, and he crept nearer, leaned his back against the brick garden wall, where it joined to the wall of the house, and looked at Rose, as she sat engaged on her needlework in the window. The sill of this window was low, a couple of feet above the turf outside. The window had looked originally into the court, but the outer walls of the court, screening the front of Towan manor-house, had been pulled down, so that it was now exposed to the road and moor.

He saw Rose signal to him, and he misread her signal. He thought she waved her hand to him to remain where he was, and be quiet, till she came out to speak to him. He waited patiently, without stirring, watching her face till the curtains were drawn. After that he waited on. He could hear voices speaking in the room where Rose was; he could distinguish that of the Squire, it was loud and rough. He thought he could hear as well that of Gerans; but he caught not a word of their conversation. What they spoke about was indifferent to him; he had not come there to hear them argue, but to see and speak to Rose, if only for a minute.

He waited on patiently. Rose would come to him, when she could; she had waved her hand to him through the window in token of recognition. He was accustomed to wait motionless by the bedside of a patient, watching a crisis; so he stood now, not altering his position. His thoughts were active. How fate had fought against him! How cruelly it had dealt with the lives of two human beings! It had separated him and Rose, and had bound her to a man she did not and could not love. He believed that she hated Gerans, and repented the day that she had married him. He believed that she loved himself, and himself only. His declaration of love had drawn from her the cry of 'Too late!' Too late had she found that she was loved by the only man whom she loved. He thought of the samphire-picking. Why had he thrown himself on the rope and arrested the fall of Gerans? Why had he not

rather let go and allowed him to crash down among the knife-like slate rocks? He wondered at himself. For once luck had befriended him—had put into his hands the chance he desired, and he had cast it from him. Had he not been an inconsiderate, impulsive fool, he would have let the cord whirl away—and Gerans would by this time have been buried, and he would not be lingering there, waiting, hoping, yet knowing that he had nothing to expect but disappointment. All he could look to was to touch Rose's hand, speak a few words about Loveday, wish her a good-night, and go away miserable, despairing, to his lonely home.

He looked at his hands, and then struck them against the wall behind him with such force that they bled. Fool that he was to stand between himself and happiness. Why had he wounded and galled his hands to save his adversary and to perpetuate his wretchedness? His wretchedness! not his own only—that of poor Rose also, chained to an uncongenial, commonplace country clown.

If he had but money, he would carry her off to some distant land, away, by sea, out of the kingdom, and begin with her a new life. But that was not possible. He was poor and powerless. He could hope for nothing more than to see Rose now and then, listen to her sweet voice, and know without expecting to hear her confess that she loved him.

The porch-door opened, and a man came forth. That man was Constantine, but he was dressed in a suit belonging to his brother. Summer twilight was in the sky, so that Dennis could see though he could not distinguish, and Constantine and Gerans were extraordinarily alike. The young surgeon was startled, and had at once to form a resolution. Where he stood he could be seen. He had presence of mind, and he came forward from his dark corner. Constantine started and drew back; he recognised him at once.

'Gerans,' said Penhalligan, 'I have come up to tell you and Rose that I have ascertained at last the address of my cousin—that is, I know where she is. This day's post has brought me tidings of her. She is at Goodrington, near Paignton. I am off in two days to see if Loveday be with her.'

'Right,' answered Constantine, afraid to speak more than a word or two lest his voice should betray him.

'Rose has told you, I suppose, that my search in Exeter was fruitless?' said Dennis.

'Yes.' Constantine moved to go away.

'I leave on Saturday, and trust at last to discover her.'

'Content.' Then, suddenly, 'Gah!—the spotted dog again!'

In the twilight he saw the white mongrel with its liver patches running round him and Dennis, limping. Then the beast stood up on its hind legs and hopped about them like a kangaroo, then flung itself down on its side as if dead.

'Curse the brute!' exclaimed Dennis. 'That dog will drive me mad. I am haunted with it. Yesterday, in the night, as I drove back from Wadebridge, it sprang over a heap of stones by the roadside at the very spot where I had been upset with Rose on the night of the Goose Fair, and I have not been able to get rid of it since. I see it continually jumping about me, and then disappearing, coming to me when I least expect it; and yet I can never lay hold of it. I have thrown stones at it, but cannot hit it. I have run after it with a stick, but cannot reach it.'

'Shoot it,' said Constantine.

'I will,' answered Dennis. 'See—it is gone!'

The dog had disappeared.

Constantine bowed and withdrew to the house. Dennis was satisfied from his manner that he—Gerans, as he supposed him—was offended. 'It is well,' muttered he—'well that he should understand that I hate him. I cannot dissemble. I am too proud and too thorough to affect love where I hate. Perhaps he knows the reason. It is best so. Best that he should know that he stands between the happiness of two unfortunates whom fate has separated. May be Rose has told him that she scorns and abhors him. It is best so. Best that he should feel some of the misery he has brought upon us.'

He walked leisurely back to Nantsillan. He did not doubt that Rose loved him. Had he not clasped her in his arms and kissed her red lips at the well, and she had forgiven him? Had not her blue eyes told him that she was pleased to see him, and had she not invited him to come

to Towan and see her again? Had not her letter shown him mistrust of her own heart? He excused her for not coming to him. She was under restraint. There was a quarrel in the family, and she was the victim. The old Squire and Gerans had been assailing her with reproaches—had been pouring over her vials of wrath and gall. She had borne this for him, because she loved him. She was doomed to a life of daily ill-treatment by two men—the boisterous, brutal father, the surly, suspicious husband—because she loved him. For how many years was this misery to be spun out, her bright life darkened, her joyous spirit saddened, her tender heart broken, because she loved him? Oh, that there were some way of escape—some means of freeing her from this bondage!

As he came to the dingle down which dived the path to his cottage, he saw a man standing at the edge of the wood, with a basket slung over his shoulder by a strap. A crescent moon was in the sky lying on its back, shedding a silvery light which, with the summer twilight, enabled him to see and recognise the pedlar whom he had first beheld at Wadebridge at the Goose Fair; but in that uncertain cold light he could not distinguish the colour of his waistcoat. The face was very white with the moon on it, and the Cornish crystal in the band round his wild, long, black hair flashed suddenly, then was unseen, then flashed again, like a revolving light at sea.

Something, Dennis could not say what, arrested his steps when he saw this strange man, and he stood watching him. The pedlar did not seem to observe him; he was playing or practising with his long basket. With his hand he rapped the bottom, and the blow jerked up the lid, whereupon a number of roses sprang into the air—white, red, yellow, perhaps, but in the combined twilight and moonlight they all gleamed a ghastly white, and fell again into the basket, when the lid dropped on them and shut them in. Another rap—up sprang the lid, and high into the cold light leaped the roses, to drop again and be shut in by the lid. The performance was clever. Not a rose fell over the side upon the ground, nor did the lid close on the flowers till all were in the basket. The man was practising, apparently. He tried to jerk the flowers higher, and each time higher, and was always equally successful in

catching and securing them. Then he changed his proceeding. He tapped twice at the bottom, and now roses and glow-worms shot up out of the basket, a rain of ghost-like bloom and pale stars. Tap, tap! and again the mingled spray was thrown up, again to fall and disappear in the basket.

Dennis stood spell-bound; how long he would have thus remained cannot be said. He was released from his astonishment by seeing the spotted cur leap out of the bushes and begin its gambols round the pedlar. Then his anger broke loose.

'You fellow!' he shouted, 'take that beast away. I have been plagued with it. I do not want either you or your dog in my neighbourhood. Get away with you at once. Leave this place. Take yourself and the brute elsewhere. I warn you—if I see that cursed dog again I will kill it!'

He stepped forward. Immediately, without a word, the man backed before him into the wood, and the dog dived behind some bushes.

'Confound these tramps!' muttered Dennis. 'Why does not Squire Gaverock, who is a justice of peace, clear the neighbourhood of them. Hah! the fellow was not as successful as I thought.'

He saw a pale rose lying on the path in his way, a rose that must have fallen from the pedlar's basket. He stooped to pick it up, but as he stood his shadow was cast over it and the piece of road on which it lay. He groped with his fingers on the ground, but picked up nothing save bits of earth and dust. Then he stood on one side to allow the crescent moon to illumine the path again. The rose was no longer there!

He went in at his garden gate, unlocked his door, and fastened it from the inside. On the hall table was laid his supper. He lit a candle and took his place, but he had no appetite, and he thrust his plate away.

He was by himself in the house. Little Ruth, after having laid supper for him, was wont to go away with the woman who came there to char for him. She slept at her cottage and returned early in the morning. She carried away the back door key with her, and let herself in with it next day. He sat up late, doing nothing with his hands,

but with his head busy. Of Loveday he thought little. He was not much concerned about her. He had made up his mind that she was with her cousin; she had discovered her somehow in Exeter, or discovered her address when there, and had gone to her, and was now at Goodrington. The journey to Exeter and the stay there had put him to some expense, and his absence had interfered with his duties at home. As is usual, he had been more wanted when away than when at Nantsillan. Several sick people had sent for him, and, finding he was absent, had transferred themselves to the old tippling doctor at Padstow.

Dennis considered how different his prospects would have been had Rose been his wife. Comfortably off, unoppressed with the daily pinch of poverty, with her presence as sunlight in his home, all the darkness and burden of his life would have rolled away. Then from out of his burning, dry heart there welled up a fiery spring of hate against Gerans. He, and he only, was it who had spoiled his life, stolen from him the woman he loved, deprived him of the money which would have made him easy in his circumstances. He had nothing to live for now—nothing—nothing—and that was Gerans' doing! He would have liked to have his enemy there, in the dark room with him, and to have fought him. His nerves quivered with pleasure at the thought of striking Gerans, of beating him down, of hearing the thud of his head on the slate floor. He stood up, with feet apart, and imagined himself standing above Gerans, with the life of his enemy in his power. Would he spare him? Dennis laughed aloud. When he laughed, then a dog outside barked, a strange bark like a laugh, or the echo of a laugh. Dennis went to the window and looked out. He could see no dog. He saw the moon twinkling among the swaying boughs and leaves of the oak wood, and the flickering lights on the ground like white dancing roses. Then he went upstairs to bed. But though he lay in bed he could not sleep. He had retired at midnight. The crescent moon was gone, or no longer shone in at the window. The wind sighed outside among the trees.

All at once, he started and raised his head. Against the whitewashed wall at the foot of his bed he thought he saw something move. The moon had not set; it had not shone into his room because of a dense mass of ivy-hung elm and

a holly that had obscured it. Now it passed from behind these bushes and flared between some boughs, making a grotesque figure on his wall that waved and moved as the branches and leaves waved and moved. The freakish light drew on his wall a figure like a white dog sitting up on its haunches, with its paws before it, begging, and the head bobbing and turning, the paws now thrust forward, then drawn in as though trying to reach some object, and failing. Moreover, the white dog was covered with moving liver spots. The head was at one moment very distinct, with a brilliant eye, then it was blurred aad shapeless, then it was turned aside and clear again. The beast seemed to put up its paws and wash its face as a cat or a rabbit, and the ears flapped as it turned its head. All the while the liver spots ran over the body, melting into each other, dividing, disappearing, then manifesting themselves again.

Suddenly the fantastic figure was gone, the wind rushed past the window, and whilst the wind rushed there was no white dog on the wall, but a whirl of white roses flying up and down fast, faster, up and down and in and out, some falling on the floor, some sprinkling their petals over the bed, but all gathering themselves up again, the petals rejoining the blossoms that shed them, and dancing like a spin of snowflakes.

Dennis threw himself back on his pillow. His mind was overwrought, his nerves unstrung; he was becoming a prey to fancies.

The gust of wind was gone; there were flickers of light and moving spots of shadow on the wall still, but no shape. He watched them till they went out, one after another. Now, certainly, the moon had passed beyond the house, or behind so dense a mass of foliage as not to cast shadows and lights in his room. So he thought, but was presently undeceived by seeing one gleaming spot, one that seemed to shine and twinkle like the Cornish crystal in the pedlar's hair. This spot appeared on the wall and travelled along it slowly. Dennis followed it with his eyes. It was formed, doubtless, like the rest of the fantastic figures, by the moon among the branches and leaves; but it was certainly strange that on this occasion there was but a single light. It crept along the whitewashed wall very stealthily. It seemed to travel like a snail, and at a snail's pace. All at once it

flashed with double brilliancy. It had touched and was gleaming on the little double-barrelled pistol Rose had given to Dennis on the night of the Goose Fair!

CHAPTER LV.

AWAY!

NEXT morning, early, Squire Gaverock departed on his cob, along the Padstow road. He did not say whither he was going, or what business took him from home; he was out of humour with both his sons, would speak to neither, and merely told Rose curtly that he would not be home to early dinner, unless he got through what he had to do much quicker than he expected. Gerans also went out, in the direction of Nantsillan, after informing Rose that he intended seeing Dennis—for what purpose he did not say.

Thus Constantine was left alone with Rose in the study.

'Gone down to Nantsillan, is he?' said the former. He was sitting half on the table, but his foot was on the ground—the right foot; the toe of the left rested on the top leather of the right boot. He wore a pair of Gerans' hunting-boots, with red leather tops. He had on his back a blue coat with brass buttons, his brother's best coat. Gerans had told him to make free with his wardrobe, and he had taken him at his word. He had on, as well, a white nankeen waistcoat, and a fine shirt with a frill—all of the best that he could rummage out of the drawers and cupboard of Gerans. He had a stick in his hand, and with the ferrule he played with the toe of his—that is, his brother's—boot. Only Gerans' best boots fitted him; those at all worn would not accommodate themselves to his feet.

'Gone down to Nantsillan, is he?' asked Constantine. 'I am not surprised. Gone to have it out with Dennis, I presume.'

'Have what out?' asked Rose. '*It* is vague, and refers to anything without life.'

'Plenty of life in this matter—a little exuberance may-hap.'

'I do not pretend to understand you,' said Rose, tossing her head and curling her lip.

'Probably you pretend *not* to understand me.'

'You take liberties to be impolite, trusting to your kinship, and to my husband's placidity of temper.'

'Oh! that placidity is ruffled, and may toss and foam. You are indebted to me that I did not work him into breakers this morning, by telling him that your gallant was hanging about the house last night under the windows, waiting for you to come out; but the naughty Gerans was within, and would not let you escape.'

'You are a bad, insolent man,' exclaimed Rose, in shame and disgust.

'The meeting in the garden was not enough by day; you must meet again by the garden wall at night.'

He laughed, but his laugh was silenced by the flaming indignation in her eyes. She was swinging herself out of the room, when he caught her by the wrist, and said:

'I have not told Gerans, but I will, unless you pay me to be silent.'

Rose did not understand him, though he pointed with his stick to the drawer where his father had locked up the money.

'Say what you like,' she answered, disengaging herself from him. 'Speak the truth—I am not ashamed of that—but hint nothing from your evil heart.'

Then she left the study and ran to her bedroom, where she locked herself in to weep her heart out. Her feelings were in tumult, swaying her from side to side. Everything rocked about her, and the ground rocked under her feet. She saw now how foolish, how inconsiderate she had been, to put her character in the hands of one so unscrupulous as Constantine. She had trifled with the thoughts of Dennis's love for no other reason than that his devotion flattered her vanity.

When she was gone, Constantine took the handle of the drawer and drew at it. The drawer was locked and resisted his efforts. There were five hundred pounds in there. Gerans offered to get a thousand for him, but Gerans had shown his powerlessness the evening before. Should he wait another day, and allow Gerans to plead for him again? He was by no means sure that his brother was in earnest.

No man who was not a fool would burden his estate with a thousand pounds if he could help it. Of course Gerans affected to desire it, as a decent show of fraternal love is expected by the world; but there was no reality in his effort, no sincerity in his protestations. No man, said Constantine, can fatten on promises. A sprat in the net is worth more than a whale in the sea.

He threw himself into his father's chair, and stretched out both his legs before him, and tapped the toes of his boots alternately with the ferrule of the cane, whilst his eyes rested on these same toes. His brows were knit, and his forehead full of creases. He thrust out his lips. 'For good or ill,' he said, 'I wish I were in my brother's boots —metaphorically as well as really.' Constantine's character had deteriorated rapidly of late. Three years ago he had been a pleasure-loving, careless, good-natured young fellow —selfish, disliking the drudgery of work, but without harm in him. Then came the initial wrong done in marrying Loveday clandestinely. From that moment he had taken a downward turn, and his path had become precipitous of late. He had allowed himself to drift into moral ruin; he had not run into it wilfully. He had never harboured bad intentions, had always desired to do what was right, but had lacked the energy to act on what he knew was right, till the perceptive moral faculty was dead within him. He was now incapable of seeing what a base and despicable ruffian he had become. The old father was not free from guilt in this disintegration of his son's character. His despotism exercised over the lads whilst their characters were forming had injured both, had deprived both of self-reliance and spontaneity.

Constantine had in his pocket the crooked nail he had picked up on the road, when walking outside the house with Gerans. Now he found a use for it. He put the nail to the drawer lock, and in another moment the money that had been left by his mother to Loveday was before him—that and the hundred pounds his father had undertaken to give him—five hundred pounds in all. His hand trembled as he turned over the bank-notes, his face was white as chalk, and cold drops beaded his brow and upper lip. But he was able to pacify his conscience. He was

taking what was his own. His mother had intended him to have it. She had left it to Loveday under an erroneous belief in his death. Besides, it was his anyhow, for Loveday was his wife, and between husband and wife there is no mine and thine, or rather, on the side of the husband, 'thine is mine, and mine is mine'—all take and no give. He put the purse with the gold and the two pocket-books away in his breast, shut the drawer, and stalked out of the room, whistling. He looked round in the hall for Rose. If she had been there he would have told her some lie to excuse his absence from dinner. His father would not be home till the afternoon. Gerans was away. Gerans would not think of examining the drawer. Rose would be too busy about household matters. He had several hours during which he could escape; but, he thought, it would not do to depart in the boat in Gerans' best blue coat. He would, indeed, take that with him; but for the rough work of rowing he would wear something less fine. So he went upstairs, took off the coat and waistcoat, and put on a common every-day suit that also belonged to Gerans, rolled up the blue coat and nankeen waistcoat in a bundle, and went off over the downs towards the cliffs, with his bundle in hand. The boat in which he had come from Stanbury—Paul Featherstone's boat—was not in the boathouse at Sandymouth; he had come into Nantsillan Cove, and had run his little craft into the Iron Gate, and drawn it up on some sands there, which were not submerged except in a storm. When he had gone a little way along the down, as if on his way to Sandymouth, he struck a different course and came round towards the steep goat-path that led down the face of the crags to the bay into which the Nantsillan brook discharged itself in a pretty fall. He had quite made up his mind what to do. He would row to New Quay, and leave the boat there. Thence he would strike inland by Truro, and cross the isthmus to Falmouth, whence he could easily and quickly get out of the country. Whether there were packets or sailing vessels bound for the West Indies from Falmouth, or that put in at Falmouth, he did not know. That he could ascertain when he got there. More probably they ran from Bristol. But that was a matter of minor consideration; his great desire now was to leave the kingdom

as expeditiously as possible. Whither he went concerned him less; with five hundred pounds in his pocket the world was open to him.

'There is Canada,' said he to himself, 'but I don't fancy it. The winters there are very cold, and I dislike cold. There are the States—but I should have to work hard there, and I am not partial to work. Then, turning in another direction, there is New South Wales, but I do not fancy the society there—a bad type of men, the scum of England, convicts, rag-tag—not the sort I could associate with. No, first thoughts are best thoughts, and the cream comes to the top when the milk is sweet. I'll go to the West Indies—perhaps Jamaica, perhaps Saint Domingo, perhaps South Carolina—anywhere where there is negro labour, and there are sugar-canes. I always had a sweet tooth; I had rather grow sugar than anything else. How Gerans and I loved treacle-pudding as boys! By George! I'll go to the West Indies, I will!' After a while he began to consider about Loveday. 'She is too finical in her ideas. I am very fond of her, and she will have two thousand six hundred in the Funds. There is this disadvantage, that she knows my unfortunate story, and might throw it in my face at any time. Perhaps it would be advisable to begin the new sum with a fresh slate; on an old one, however rubbed, the figures come through and confuse the reckoning. I am very deeply attached to Loveday, and she is my wife. If I am an exile, it will be a pleasure to have some one to speak with who knows about the old place, and with whom one can talk of former times—pleasant times before this wretched muddle came about. Besides, I must have some one to cook and stitch, and knit my stockings. I think I will send for Loveday. Yet, perhaps it will be wisest for me to see how I can get on without her first. If I want her two thousand six hundred I can always fetch her over. If I find I can do without, well, I shall be unencumbered. This is settled; Loveday waits on my convenience. The woman was made for man, and not man for the woman. She has caused me annoyance and heartache and mental worry enough at Stanbury and Marsland. It is well that she should suffer a bit for it, and learn by punishment not to be self-seeking.' He strode on a little further, and his thoughts took another direction. He

laughed. 'Curse it,' said he, 'I am sorry to go without enlightening Gerans' mind about that little pretty coquet, Rose. He is without a suspicion. I wish I had told him that I found the doctor lingering under the garden wall last night. I owe Gerans a kindness. I will write to him when I reach Falmouth, and post my letter just before I step aboard. I will tell him all I have seen, and what I suspect. Then there will be a storm in Towan. I should like to be there to witness it. However, one cannot fire a gun and stand by the target and see the shot strike.' He was now very near the head of the path where it descended the precipice. 'I wonder,' he said to himself, 'I wonder what Gerans had to say to Penhalligan this morning. He looked grave when he went off, and intended something more than to invite him to go out fishing or row after seals. If he was going to call him to order for casting sheep's eyes at Rose, there will be an ugly end to the meeting, for Dennis is violent when his blood is up, and Gerans, for all his quietness, is deuced determined when his honour is touched. I would give a crown to be present at that interview; but we cannot have all our wishes gratified, and I have got five hundred pounds in my pocket, and the sea is before me.'

Constantine descended the path in the face of the rock very warily. He was accustomed to cliffs; he could look down without losing his head. Some people can climb up more easily than descend; it was not so with Constantine in more ways than one.

'I think,' said Constantine, as he crept down, holding by one hand to every projection of rock available, and trying the path before him with his foot before he rested any weight on it, 'I think it both a queer and an unfair thing that Gerans and I should be as like as two acorns growing on one stalk, and yet that he should have the sunshine and I the shadow, he the luck, and I the loss.'

He reached the shore in safety. 'Ah!' he growled, 'the tide does not quite suit. There is a fatality against me. I cannot get the boat out for another hour—perhaps more. I must go into Porthiern, and lie hid there, and be ready to float the boat as soon as the water rises. No one will dream of looking for me there; besides, the money will not be missed till father returns, and that will not be till afternoon.'

He jumped upon the ledge of slate rock that ran into the tunnel scooped by the waves through the promontory of Cardue, and disappeared within the vault.

CHAPTER LVI.

A SHOT.

Gerans Gaverock walked to Nantsillan. The morning was bright, and every bush in the glen was hung with dew-drops, that twinkled prismatically in the early sun. Near the sea the dew falls of a clear night heavily, and beads the twigs and grass with drops as rain.

Gerans' face, as Constantine had remarked, was serious. He was not going to tell Penhalligan that Constantine was there, because his brother did not wish it, but he was determined to let him know that Loveday was not a widow, as he and she supposed.

'Where is your master?' asked Gerans at the door of little Ruth, who answered the knock.

'Master hev a-gone out and about wi' a pistol,' answered the girl. 'There hev been a queer white spotted dog about the place yesterday and all night and this morning, sure enough, a-worriting of master. He hev a-took on terrible, and he've gone out to shoot 'n. Nobody seems to know nothing about the dog; her don't belong to nobody, seemings.'

'Which way has Mr. Penhalligan gone?'

'Down the coombe, your honour. But, sir, don't you go for to run in the way when he's a-firing. It be the spotted dog he's going to kill, and master'd be terrible put out if he shot you instead o' the dog.'

Gerans looked at the little garden before the cottage as he went through it. The absence of Loveday's hand was perceptible. The white jasmine had broken away from its ties against the wall, and was fallen over on a flower-bed; the Canterbury bells had been beaten by wind and rain, and needed binding to a stick. Weeds had sprung up among the garden flowers, and daisy-leaves appeared with grass in the paths. Even the gate, and the doorstep, looked uncared for, and the window-glass was not clean in a climate

where incrusting salt from the sea-air has to be incessantly rubbed away.

Gerans walked slowly down the glen towards the cove, looking on all sides for Penhalligan. The little stream, running among ferns and under trees, emerged from shadow, and danced sparkling over stones, where the grove abruptly stopped at a turn of the valley and gave place to short turf and furze. The point where exposure to the prevalent north-west wind began was marked as sharply as with a knife. The trees were arrested, and the sea-grass and thrift began. The air was light, the sea blue, and the hills primrose in the soft sunlight, with here and there a cobalt shadow cast by a white cloud on the down sides, indigo when on the sea. Gerans now saw Penhalligan before him, and he called. Dennis turned. He had the pistol in his hand. He saw that Gerans' eye was on it, and he explained the reason of his carrying it.

'Do you remember that pedlar at the Goose Fair? He had a white spotted dog. Well, that dog has haunted me of late. I see it everywhere. It runs round me when I walk. I hear it outside my house. I dream of it in my bed. It stood this morning on my doorstep looking in on me, then it scampered off. I will make an end of the brute. I will be pestered with it no more. It has gone this way, I believe, but I do not see it at the moment.'

'The pistol is loaded?'

'Oh yes, both barrels; if one fails, the other shall not.'

'Never mind the dog. Come on with me, Dennis, down into the cove, or to that rock by the fall, where we can sit in the sun together, and talk. I have something I want to say to you very particularly.'

'I am at your service. My time is not in such requisition that I cannot spare an hour. Besides, Ruth knows where I am should anyone come to the surgery for me.'

'I have not had an opportunity of speaking alone to you since Loveday left,' said Gerans. 'No news of her, Rose tells me.'

'None.'

'Are you going to seek her again?'

'Yes; to-morrow. I think she is near Paignton with her cousin.'

'You think; you are not sure.'

'I am not sure ; I suspect.'

'I shall sit here,' said Gerans, letting himself down on the stone. 'I like to hear the plash of the water. Sit down also, Dennis.'

'Thank you. I prefer to stand.'

Gerans sat musing in the sun ; his pleasant, good-natured face was troubled now ; he wanted to tell Dennis that Constantine was alive without allowing him to suspect that he was then at Towan. He was so open in character and frank of speech that he had great difficulty in keeping anything concealed. He was now considering how he was to tell half the truth.

'You think you will see Loveday shortly,' he asked.

'I consider it probable.'

'Give my love to her. I always have had the greatest regard for Loveday. She is so noble, so good, so true.'

Dennis said nothing in reply.

'Tell her that I hope by the time she returns, or, if she does not return, by the time we know she is settled somewhere, I may be able to give her an agreeable surprise. Probably the very pleasantest surprise that could be given her. Can you guess, Dennis?'

'Not at all.'

'Well, only tell her that, no more. It will set her mind working, and her loving heart fluttering.' He looked up. 'Dennis, turn the mouth of the pistol another way, will you? It is aimed now right at my heart. You are a nervous being, and your finger might twitch the trigger involuntarily if I said something to surprise you very much, and—that would be bad for both of us.'

Penhalligan averted the barrel, and muttered something which Gerans did not catch. But Gerans looked attentively at his face, and said, 'Dennis, old fellow, you are out of humour with me. You have been so for some time; you have avoided me, and have answered me shortly. By the Lord! if we are not friends it is a pity—close neighbours, and meeting each other daily ; not so only, but brothers-in-law. Come, Dennis, sit down on that stone, and tell me how I have offended you.'

Penhalligan's face darkened. His brows drew together. Instead of complying with the request of Gerans he planted himself more firmly where he stood, with one foot on the

path, the other on a stone, and folded his arms, the pistol thrust forth out of his right, pointing behind him towards the crags of Cardue. He made no other answer to Gerans.

'Well!' said the latter, 'this is not the best of fellowship. However,' he sighed, 'I have no complaint to make against you; it is you who have occasion against us. That is why I am here now, Dennis. That is what I want to speak about. I have been thinking a great deal of late about your sister, and I see that she has been ungenerously, even cruelly, treated by us. I ought to have seen this before. I did see it in a vaporous manner, but now I see it all sharp and clear before me. I have leaned too much hitherto on my father's judgment, and taken his opinion as infallible. I acknowledge my mistake. A man must think for himself, and do what is right according to his own conscience, not according to what another thinks is right. That has been my weakness, but I see it now, and will fight against it. I do not like to resist my father; I do not like to suppose he can be wrong; but still—it is inevitable that we should not see duties alike.'

'To what does this preface lead?'

'To this, Dennis. I have resolved to let all the world know the relationship in which Loveday stands to us. It is all very well for my father to banish her for a twelvemonth, and say that he will take a year to decide whether he will acknowledge her or not. I acknowledge her as my sister. I have a voice in the matter as well as he. I have a conscience which tells me it is a shame and a sin to conceal this any longer, and to impose hardships on poor Loveday. My God! it is an honour to us to have her for our relative. If I have occasion to be proud of anything, it is of that. She is a noble girl, and I will hold up my head at the thought that she is my sister. I think I esteem her even more highly than do you.'

Dennis shrugged his shoulders, and said nothing.

'I have had a passage of arms with my father,' continued Gerans, 'about another matter, in which he was in the wrong and I in the right, and to my astonishment I have carried my point. We differed about the raising of a thousand pounds on the property, and—will you believe it?—after a hard fight he gave way, gave way all at once, and has gone over to-day to Padstow about the money. Now,

I am well satisfied that Loveday has been unfairly dealt with by us Gaverocks. It all began with Constantine. I did not like to speak against him when I thought him dead—that is, not at first, but I felt that he had acted very wrongfully by her. Now I do not mind saying this plainly. It is from us that expiation should come. We have injured Loveday, not Loveday us. Constantine trapped her into a clandestine marriage, and held her by a promise of silence under false assurances: he assured her that he would tell his father about their union, and he failed to do so. Loveday fulfilled her part honourably; Constantine betrayed the trust she had placed in him. This is clear to me now as Cardue Point, and it is a truth not tunnelled through and liable to be broken down like Cardue Point.'

Gerans paused, and looked up at Penhalligan. The same gloomy frown was on his face; his arms were folded tight, his hands clenched, his lips were drawn over his teeth, and were white.

'I dare say you have felt that we have used you badly,' pursued Gerans. 'I consented to hold my tongue because Loveday urged it. But I ought not to have listened to her. It was weak in me to give way. That you have resented our behaviour I am well aware. I have seen how you have drawn away from me and have declined my friendship. That has gone to my heart, and I have felt it the more because I knew it was deserved. Now, Dennis, I ask your pardon. I will keep silence no longer. This very evening I will have the matter out with my father, and Loveday shall have right done her, full, and immediate. I go over to-morrow to Madam Loveys to tell her everything, and through her I trumpet the truth to the entire neighbourhood. It will be in vain for my father to oppose me; I will carry through what I now know to be right. But that is not all; there is more to be told, only not yet. You must have patience, Dennis, and in a week at furthest you shall hear additional news which will surprise and please you. Have you been told that my mother has left all she had to Loveday?'

'No. I was away when your mother was buried.'

'She has left her four hundred pounds in cash, and two thousand six hundred in the Stocks.'

Dennis turned and looked at Gerans with surprise.

'It is true,' said Gerans; 'my father is executor, and has the money ready for Loveday directly she is found. I am delighted at this, and it will help to reconcile my father to the view I take.'

He waited, expecting Penhalligan to say something; as he did not, Gerans went on, with increasing eagerness and some emotion: 'There, Dennis! You know now that I will do all that is honourable and just towards your sister. It has not been done before this because I have been—yes, I will confess it—a coward. I gave way to my father in everything, without weighing my own responsibility. You may believe me, Dennis, when I assure you that I have been brought to see my weakness, and to make this confession by having suffered in a way you do not know, but which has been very cutting to me. I have had to undergo punishment, and my sentence is not yet worked out; however, I will bear it, and do better. Now give me your hand, Dennis, old fellow, and let us be best friends again.'

He stood up from the rock on which he had been sitting and held out his hand towards the surgeon.

'Take it away,' said Dennis, hoarsely, 'I am not a hypocrite. I will not promise what I cannot give.' He quivered with emotion. He saw that by striking Gerans in the chest he could upset him over the edge of the rock, and that then Gerans would fall down the steep cliff and be broken in every bone.

Gerans looked at him with surprise. 'Dennis,' he said, gravely, 'no one, not even my deadliest enemy, would have offered me his hand and asked pardon, and been refused.'

'How do you know that I am not your deadliest enemy?' cried Dennis in a sudden outburst of hate and rage.

'My enemy!—and yet you saved my life?' said Gerans, shaking his head.

'Cursed, cursed to all eternity be the moment in which I did that!' exclaimed Dennis, in a paroxysm of jealousy and fury. 'I hate myself for having done it. Go along with you, I tell you, go whilst you may. Beware of me! I am dangerous! There is no more room on earth for you and me.'

His words, his face, the twitching of his hands, one of which held the deadly weapon, showed a conflict of dread and desperation in his heart.

Gerans looked him firmly, questioningly, in the eyes. Dennis turned his face away. He could not meet his look. Then Gerans reseated himself on the stone, and hid his face in his hands.

After a few minutes of mutual silence, Gerans said, in a voice that shook, 'Dennis, you do not bear me this hatred on account of your sister?'

The answer of Penhalligan was a groan.

What was there in the tone of this utterance that made Gerans look at his companion with a face that grew cold and livid with horror? The secret of Dennis's soul was revealed by that moan. The truth, to which he had been so long and so unaccountably blind, was disclosed by it to Gerans. If Dennis loved Rose, then, indeed, all hope of reconciliation was over.

He stood slowly up, and without a word went up the path towards the coombe. He must be alone with the anguish and terror that tossed and tore in his heart.

His silence and his departure showed Dennis that his love had been discovered. The die was cast. Never again could he and Gerans meet. He could no more go up to Towan and see Rose. If he had thrust Gerans over the precipice, even then, when the truth burst on him, and he was stunned with the discovery, the riddle would have been solved, Rose have been free, and himself on the way to happiness; but when, for the second time, the life of his rival had been in his power, he had not seized the opportunity. 'Woe be to him if he gives me a third chance!' exclaimed Dennis.

Then he descended the steep path to the bay. He would pace the sand, and consider his course. The image of Rose stood before him, in her pretty white dress with a blue sash, her golden hair, her forget-me-not blue eyes full of sparkle, as she stood before him in the glade carpeted with dead leaves, holding the four-leafed shamrock, and bidding him not despair. He flamed at the vision. His blood went in scalding waves through his arteries. She was not happy; she could not be happy with Gerans, because she loved him, Dennis. He fancied he heard her voice above the swash of the rising tide, that lapped the sand, and stroked it, and withdrew, to lap again, 'Save me! release me! Dennis!'

He fancied her extending her delicate arms towards him, love and longing on her red lips, in her gleaming eyes.

What salvation was possible for Rose? None, save through the death of Gerans, and twice had he put from him the chance of freeing her without grasping it.

The sun was hot; fevered with his thoughts, teased with the roughness of the beach, that was cut through with vertical reefs of slate, he looked for shade, where he could rest and be cool. He stood by the projecting portion of the slate ledge that ran some way into the Porthiern tunnel. He mounted the ledge. In the gloom and chill of the Iron Gate he would sit and think what was to be done. He crept along the shelf, and suddenly—confronted the man he hated.

The gulls in Nantsillan Cove were startled by a report—it sounded like that of a gun—from the depths of Porthiern, and the echo was caught and beaten back by the cliff opposite. Then Cardue took the echo, and flung it back at Sillan Head. And so the opposite crags played ball with the report, till it grew so faint and small that they threw it away.

The reverberations were not done when a man rushed out of the cave, leaped from the shelf, and crossed the sands hastily towards the path that led to Nantsillan.

CHAPTER LVII.

ANOTHER SHOT.

'HERE I am,' said old Gaverock, bustling into the hall, with his coat tails pinned forward, his riding-whip in hand, his top-boots on his feet. 'Back for dinner after all. I rode right on end into Padstow, went into the bank, settled my business, and here I am again. Rose, all is settled famously. Con shall have a hundred pounds to start with, and as soon as he gets to Barbadoes, or Jericho, or Botany Bay—wherever it is that he intends to set up—then he shall have nine hundred. I've not a word to say against Gerans for sticking up to me as he did last night. If a man has an opinion, let him flourish it, and not throw it away. I respect him for it. Gerans will be a man yet. Where is he,

Rose? The bell has rung. I heard it as I came along the down. Heigh! some one, ring the house-bell again. The boys are out in the stable-yard may be, and so engrossed in the horses that they cannot hear. In my time I was always hearty for my dinner, never missed a meal, and was first in my place at table. Ring the bell! But, Rose, we will begin. I wait for no man. What is it? Roast mutton?'

The Squire was in good spirits; he talked incessantly during dinner, interrupting his conversation at intervals to inquire after Gerans and Constantine. It appeared to Rose that he had come round to the opinion of his eldest son about giving Constantine the large sum asked for him, but he did not like to admit it; he pretended that he yielded because the real person to be pinched would be Gerans, not himself, and that he could not stand in the way of a man nipping his finger in a door, if he chose wilfully to nip it.

Rose did not share the old man's spirits; she had been so much disturbed by Constantine's insolence in the morning, and by the rude awakening of her conscience that had resulted from it, that she was depressed, and, although she would not admit it to herself, uneasy at the absence of her husband. Gerans had gone to speak in private about some serious matter to Dennis. Was she the subject of their talk? Would she be the occasion of a quarrel? Had she by her folly nourished the hopeless passion of Dennis, and alienated from her the heart of Gerans? Her eyes were red with tears, but the Squire did not observe this.

'Run,' said she to one of the servants, 'run to Nantsillan, and inquire if Mr. Gerans has been there.'

The messenger returned to say that Mr. Gerans had been there in the morning, and had gone after Mr. Penhalligan, and that neither had returned.

After dinner the old man went out to inspect some buildings that were being repaired at the back, and to see that his cob had eaten her oats and was properly groomed.

Rose went to her room. She was restless. She looked at her face in the glass, and was shocked to see how pale she was and how red about the eyes. She soused her face well with fresh water, and, to distract her attention from her self-reproaches, changed her gown.

The room was hot, and she could not breathe. She put

on her hat and went out to walk on the down, and fill her lungs with sea-air—and to look for Gerans.

'Where are you going?' shouted the Squire. He was outside the calves' house, ordering a portion of the wall to be rebuilt. 'Going to hunt after your husband? Don't you have any fears about him; he and Con have probably gone fishing.'

She went on, in the direction of Nantsillan Cove, over the track taken by Constantine that morning. She had no intention of descending the dangerous path. She purposed looking out seaward, on the chance of getting a sight of Gerans and Constantine in a boat.

Suddenly, Dennis Penhalligan stood before her. He came abruptly on her from the steep ascent. Rose's heart leaped and stood still when she saw that he was alone. He did not seem to observe her at first. His hat was drawn over his eyes and his step was uncertain. When he heard her call his name he looked at her with eyes the expression of which frightened her.

'Mr. Penhalligan!' she cried, 'for pity's sake tell me, where is my husband?'

His eyes flashed, then faded. He seemed like a man who was recovering from a swoon, who did not know where he was and who was addressing him. He opened his mouth to speak, but only an unintelligible murmur issued from it. Rose was seriously alarmed. His manner was enough to startle her, her conscience sufficiently aroused to warn her of danger. In her fear she grasped his wrist, she shook him, and said:

'Tell me, tell me, where is Gerans?'

Then he seemed to recover himself. His eyebrows drew together, and his eyes kindled. He looked at her with a searching glance, and asked in a low tone, 'Am I his keeper? What do I care for him?'

Rose let go her hold. She turned deadly pale and trembled. Her heart stood still. She looked at him with terror, afraid to ask more. His eyes fell. He remained before her with his head sunk, and his nervous hand clutching at something in his breast pocket.

'Dennis,' said Rose, 'where is he?'

'You do not love him, why then do you ask?' he said, in a hoarse whisper.

Then she laid hold of him, fiercely, frantically, with a hand on each shoulder. 'Dennis! tell me! Have you seen him? What has happened? Where is he?'

'Let me go,' answered he, sullenly. 'Gerans will trouble you no more. He has fallen—down the rocks—into the sea—is dead!'

Then Rose uttered a scream, shriller than the cry of the sea-gulls. 'You have killed him—murderer!'

She was staggering forward to the cliff edge, unconscious whither she went, when he caught her, and said in a deep, hoarse, vibrating tone:

'Why do you cry? You did not love him.'

'I—I not love him!' She wrung her hands over her head in the air. 'O Gerans! dear husband! my dearest love! my only love! It is not true; you are not dead!'

'Rose!—you love me.'

She thrust him away with a cry of horror, and, turning, ran home, threw herself before her father-in-law on her knees and cried: 'He is dead! He is dead! He has been murdered! O my God, have mercy on me! O my God, forgive me!'

But when she had turned from Penhalligan, with a look and cry of loathing, she heard a laugh behind her, a laugh the like of which she never had heard before, the sound of which in all her after-life she never forgot. The laugh proceeded from Dennis. He had committed murder, and Rose loved the murdered man. His ill fate pursued him to the last. Fate played a hideous game with him, and mocked him to the end. Rose loved Gerans, had loved him all along, and had not cared for him—Dennis. She had coquetted with him, but had reserved for him no place in her heart. With this torturing thought gnawing at his brain he reached his cottage.

'Please, sir,' said little Ruth, 'will you have some dinner? There be cold roast beef and pickled cauliflower.'

He started, and left the house again. He must be alone now. He staggered up the coombe till he came to the spot where the floor of dead leaves lay, now as of old—the place where Rose had bidden him not despair. He moved like a piece of clockwork. From the moment that he saw the white face of Gerans before him in the Iron Gate, and fired at him, to the moment that he met Rose on

the cliffs, he remembered nothing. He had seen Gerans, struck by his ball, totter back, and fall from the ledge of rock into the water below, a dark pool left by the ebbed tide, which the rising tide was replenishing.

Murder! That word uttered by Rose hammered in his ear, and would not cease. He had committed a murder. For what end? To break the heart of Rose, and to cover his soul with an indelible stain. Whether brought to justice or not mattered nothing—the self-reproach, the consciousness of guilt would never leave him, night or day.

Dead! Gerans dead! In the stupefaction that followed the first outbreak of horror, this was all that Rose could repeat. She felt everything spin about her. She ran into the hall, without purpose, without knowing whither she went, and fell on her knees, with her hands pressed to her brow, rocking herself in a stunned state, in which she could think of nothing. She moaned, and the tears ran over her cheeks, her brain was bursting, her heart was contracted with a spasm of pain. So old Gaverock found her. What was the meaning of her alarm? What occasion had she for her fear? Why did she frighten him without cause? As he spoke he seemed to be turning about the piercing sword that had penetrated to her heart, and with every turn a fresh gash was made. She screamed with pain.

'Rose, be rational,' said the Squire. 'Dead! Murdered! How dead? By whom murdered?'

'He is dead; I know it,' cried Rose. 'Murdered by Dennis Penhalligan.'

'This is nonsense,' said the old man. 'Woman's exaggeration and irrational jumping to conclusions. Why do you say this? Give me a reason. Have you seen Gerans? How do you know he is dead? What grounds have you for your charge? Because he did not return to dinner you have worked yourself into hysterics. That is it. I know women.'

Rose somewhat recovered her senses when thus catechised. What would she not have given now to be able to say that she had no grounds for believing that Dennis had killed her husband, no grounds for supposing that he bore him enmity! She, she herself was the cause of the crime; her vanity, which craved for flattery, and which was pleased with alluring to her such a man as Dennis. She, she herself

had murdered Gerans. She had inflamed the heart of Penhalligan against him. She was as guilty of his death as if she had murdered him with her own hand. Then there surged up in her memory the recollection of her unkindness to Gerans, the coldness with which she had met his overtures, the bitterness with which she had reproached him. 'I know he is dead. Dennis Penhalligan told me so,' was all she could say to her father-in-law. Old Gaverock was angry with her tears, impatient with the difficulty of getting a statement out of her mouth.

'I don't believe a word of it,' he said. 'Women like to imagine disasters, and enjoy a squeal over them, knowing that there is nothing at the bottom. I'll go to Penhalligan, and learn from him what this means.' Then he strode out of the house.

Rose remained where she was, a prey to despair and self-reproach. She threw herself in a chair, and wept and prayed, and beat her head. The servants heard her, and peeped in at the door, and whispered; then one of the oldest ventured in and spoke to her, and asked what was the matter, was she ill? She had better have a drop of brandy.

'Go away! Leave me alone; I am not ill!' She started erect on her knees, and thrust the woman away with her right hand, with the left in her hair, which was dishevelled, and falling about her neck. She was as one mad, mad with the agony of remorse. The servant-maid withdrew; but Rose could not remain where she was, with the girls talking about her, peering in, and volunteering advice. She stood up, went out of the porch door, and tottered along the path towards Nantsillan.

Hark! a shot. She shrunk in all her muscles and nerves at the sound.

Half an hour passed. She had staggered to the garden wall, and was leaning against that, looking along the path, waiting for the return of her father-in-law. That half-hour to her went creeping along as if each minute were an hour.

Presently she saw Hender Gaverock rise from the coombe and come slowly along the way towards her. She tried to leave the wall and go to meet him, but her knees yielded under her weight. She was constrained to await him there. One look at his altered countenance sufficed to

convince her that her worst fears were well founded. She had lost Gerans for ever. The face of the old Squire was grey as ashes.

'I cannot ask any questions of Dennis Penhalligan,' he said, in a low tone. 'He has shot himself through the heart.'

CHAPTER LVIII.

ON FOUR OARS.

The old man said no more. He went past Rose, towards the house. Rose's tears dried in her eyes. She crept after her father-in-law, supporting herself against the brick garden wall till she came to the spot where Dennis had stood the evening before, watching her through the window. Vividly did she now see him, as he looked at her with his burning eyes. She cried out with fear. She fled from the spot, and stumbled over the porch steps. Dennis was dead also. Dead—by his own act. Her guilt became deeper, blacker, more hideous!

No one in Towan noticed her. There was commotion there. Old Gaverock was sending the men out to look for Gerans—or his body; and one fellow rode away towards Padstow, with loose rein, to summon the old drunken doctor, and another ran off to the farm nearest Nantsillan, to get aid for removing the body of Penhalligan from the glade to his house.

Rose crouched on the steps, holding to a granite ball that ornamented the low wall that enclosed them. Her shame was more than she could bear. For some time she could not cry, but at last the tears began to flow again, and as they flowed they washed away all the false colours with which she had disguised to herself the relations in which she had stood to Dennis, colours painted on with the hand of discontent, vanity, and weakness. She knew her guilt. She could no longer excuse her conduct, and the breath of death blew away all the ashes which had overlain and threatened to choke the glowing embers of her real love for Gerans.

Hitherto Rose had lived in a dream of pleasure and self-confidence. Now she was rudely awakened to see the

ruin that her thoughtlessness had brought on herself and others.

Squire Gaverock went out with his men, and searched the shore of Sandymouth and Nantsillan Cove in vain. They ran out the boats and explored the rocks where they rose out of the sea. They could find no trace of the presence of Gerans, alive or dead. After a search of some hours the Squire came home. He bade his men continue their examination of the coast; he returned to inquire if any tidings of his lost son had reached Towan during his absence. He found that none had.

Then he entered his study, and threw himself into his chair, to consider what was to be done. He passed his hand over his eyes and brow, and the hand shook as he did so. However often he made this movement he was unable to brush away the picture of Dennis lying on the mat of russet autumn leaves, cemented together with the rain and rot of winter, with a pistol falling from his lifeless hand, and the blood clotted on his breast over the heart.

Would Penhalligan have destroyed himself had Rose's accusation been unfounded? This question insisted on being answered, but he strove to put the question away from him. Why had Rose accused him? Was it only because Dennis had informed her of the death of her husband, or did some dreadful mystery lurk behind this into which he dare not look? The old man's mouth quivered, as did his hand. One dark mystery after another stole through his thoughts, unexplained, which he feared to attempt to solve. A tide was rising and surrounding him, and each wave that leaped higher was more threatening than the last. What lay before him? What were the discoveries that would be forced on him? He heard Rose's foot in the hall. He would not go out to her. He would not speak to her. He shrank from even looking at her. To what extent was she responsible for what had taken place? He dared not ask her, or ask himself.

The ambition of his life was at an end. In one moment his pride, his desire, were broken down. His hopes, his ambitions, had been centred in his son, and lay dead with him.

Suddenly he started back in his chair, and ran it against the bookcase, and sat staring at the drawer of his table. The drawer had been tampered with. There were marks on it that an effort had been made to open it, and that the lock had been broken. He stood up and put his hand to the drawer. It opened readily. The lock was torn off, the mahogany bruised. The money was gone. Purse and pocket-book—the purse with the gold, the pocket-book with the notes—all were gone,

Who was the robber? Had this robbery any connection with the loss of Gerans and the self-destruction of Penhalligan? The number of questions rising before the old man's mind and demanding replies was growing and becoming bewildering. He was led from darkness to deeper darkness, into night profound.

His mind went at once to Constantine. That Gerans had taken the money did not suggest itself to him. That Dennis had done so, been caught in the act by Gerans, that Dennis had killed him to conceal his theft, and then, finding he could not escape, had shot himself, was a possible solution. But then, where was Constantine? Why was he away? Why had not signs of him been seen? The brothers had not gone out boating together. Every boat that belonged to Towan was in its place. Where was Constantine to give them some information about Gerans? Then, suddenly, it occurred to the old man that if Penhalligan had taken the money, the purse and note-book would be found on him. He ought to have remained by the corpse and examined the pockets. But he had been too alarmed and anxious to find Gerans to consider that; besides, when Dennis was discovered, the Squire had no suspicion that the money was taken.

Where was Constantine? Constantine had wanted the money. He was impatient to have it at once; he had refused to stay more than a day. There was a mystery about Constantine. He had darkly hinted that he was in danger of arrest for some crime. The Squire had put this from him as an attempt to extort the money from him by playing on his family pride. But now he began to fear that there was some truth in the threat. Constantine had taken money elsewhere, or forged a name. That would explain both his reticence and his eagerness to get away.

He had not told his parents that he was alive because he wished it to be thought generally that he was dead, and that so his guilt might not be disclosed. By some means it had been found out that he was not dead, and he had come home to be helped to escape from the country, and now that this help had been delayed he had taken the money from his father's drawer, and gone. Perhaps this was the story of Constantine, the old man thought, with a flush on his brow, and with clenched hands.

But—what had this to do with the disappearance of Gerans and the suicide of Dennis? Time alone could solve these riddles. Then a fresh horror came on him, and made him gasp. If Gerans were dead, then his estate, and the representation of the family, the headship of the Gaverocks —*Toujours sans tache*—would devolve on Constantine, on this runagate, this wretch who robbed his own father and wife, who was flying from justice! What would become of Towan in the hands of an unprincipled scoundrel, who dare not show his face in England? He groaned. He would have paid out his heart's blood to the last drop cheerfully at that moment, if with it he could redeem Gerans from death. He compared the two brothers, so strangely alike in face and build; and now a flame of real love flashed up through the thick crust of pride that he had suffered to grow over his heart. Gerans had always been an obedient, amiable son, had never given him annoyance, had been ever upright and true and manly.

He had not treated Gerans properly; he had exacted from him submission with despotic authority, he had not considered his years, and that he ought to have taken him into counsel, and listened to his opinion. He saw by the unselfishness of Gerans, with which he had stood forth on behalf of his brother, that his heart was good to the core; he saw by the pertinacity with which he held to his determination, that he was bold where he felt he was right. A feeling of pride at the recognition of the merits of Gerans woke up in the old man's soul, and now the tears began to trickle down his cheeks, from eyes that had not been thus moistened since childhood.

Alas! no tears, no love, no recognition, would bring back the dead.

Squire Gaverock went to Nantsillan. He put on his

roughest manner to disguise his emotion. He found the house overrun with the curious; no one was in authority, every one had as much right there as another. He drove them all out except the farmer's wife, Mrs. Jemima Josse, and the charwoman, and old Mary Tregothnan, who undertook to lay the body out; all the gentlefolks liked her to lay them out, she explained, she did make such pretty corpses of them. Then he inquired whether any money had been found in the pockets of the dead man, any purse, any note-books. Yes, a leather purse had been found that contained a few shillings. Farmer Josse had taken charge of that as he was constable. Yes, there had been discovered one note-book; it was produced, and the Squire saw it was the surgeon's pocket register of his visits and the maladies of the patients visited. Mr. Gaverock made strict inquiries, and had no occasion to doubt that this was all. The constable, Mr. Josse, had been on the spot when the body was moved, and had seen and taken note of everything the pockets contained. The Squire placed Mrs. Josse in charge. She was an old servant of Towan, her husband a tenant; Nantsillan was the property of the Gaverocks, and Squire Hender was Justice of Peace. He was accordingly obeyed promptly.

Then he returned to Towan. As his face was directed homeward the stern and rough expression deserted it, and it became haggard and distressed.

'Any news?' he asked.

There were none.

'Where is Mrs. Rose?'

'Please your honour, her's upstairs, a-locked into the bedroom, a-crying like blazes. Us have took her up some tea and toast, but her won't touch it.'

'Go, someone, upstairs, and tell her to come to me into the study. Tell her I insist on her obedience.'

He went into the library and cast himself into the chair.

In a few moments Rose entered, so changed in face and manner that the Squire looked at her some time with surprise without speaking.

'Rose,' said he at last, 'are you now sufficiently composed to answer questions in a rational manner?'

She looked up at him. He thought her eyes filled her

face, so large were they, so shrunk were her fresh and rounded cheeks. Her lips moved, but she could not speak. The lips had lost their cherry redness.

'Rose,' he said, 'tell me everything you know, everything that can help me to understand what has happened. There is something behind this to which I cannot get, and which you, perhaps, may disclose.'

'I will tell you everything,' she answered slowly, then paused to gather up her courage and strength for the avowal.

In that pause she and the old man heard a step on the hall floor that they knew, and held their breath.

The study door opened, and he whom they believed to be dead came in.

Squire Gaverock grasped the arms of his chair, and half rose from it. That was Gerans, certainly, before him, and not his ghost, though Gerans looking pale and dejected. Rose uttered a cry, flew to his breast, and threw her arms round him.

'Gerans! Gerans! you are alive!'

Her cry was as full of joy and ecstasy of love as the song that breaks from the throat of a nightingale on a still spring night. It went direct to the heart of Gerans, who understood its meaning, and he put his arm round her, and held her to his beating heart, whilst with the other hand he pressed back the white brow that was buried in his bosom, in order that he might look into her eyes. She dared not yet meet his steady, inquiring eyes, and she shook her head from his hold, and laid it on his shoulder, and burst into a storm of tears.

Old Squire Gaverock held out his hand. 'So, so—a false alarm. That is well.' He drew a long breath. 'Women are fools. With my sixty-five years, Golly! I ought to have known better than believe their alarms. Gerans, we thought you were dead.'

'I am alive and sound,' answered Gerans, with astonishment. 'This is not the first time I have absented myself from dinner.'

'Where is Constantine?'

'Is he not here? I have not seen him.'

'Gerans, where did you part from Penhalligan?'

'At the waterfall into the cove.'

'What had you to do with him?' asked the Squire, gravely.

'With Dennis? Oh, we had a conversation.'

'And an altercation?'

'Not on my side. I apologised to him for our conduct to Loveday. I shall speak about that presently.'

'Do you not know what has happened?'

'Happened?—to him?—no. I parted from him many hours ago.'

'Rose charged him with having murdered you, and he has shot himself.'

Gerans stared at his father with horror and perplexity. He became pale as death, whilst Rose clung to him more passionately. He put his hand over his eyes, and tried to collect his thoughts.

'I do not understand this,' he said. 'Dennis has been for some time incensed against us, against me for not taking up Loveday's cause with the vigour that I ought to have shown, and for something else I need not mention.' He felt Rose's arms contract convulsively about him, and heard a sob escape her labouring bosom. 'And he has been irritated with you, father, for sending Loveday away and not acknowledging her, as you ought to have done. Then ensued the disappearance of Loveday. It is possible that poor Dennis's mind has become disturbed. I did not think him himself when I left him this morning. I did not tell him plainly that Constantine had returned. I do not think he had heard of it, or he would have mentioned it to me. I only told him that a great surprise and joy were in store for Loveday.'

'Gerans,' said Rose, looking up in his face, through her tears, 'dear Gerans, he told me that you were dead. He had seen you fall.'

'His mind was disturbed,' said Gerans, 'poor fellow! My God! what troubles, what sorrows come on us!'

Neither his father nor his wife had anything to say to this. A tear came from Gerans' eye and fell on the cheek of Rose, a tear of sorrow for his friend.

Then they heard a tramp of feet, and, looking through the study window, they saw eight men approach the house carrying four oars crossed on their shoulders, and on the oars lay a body.

Before the eight men walked another, carrying a bundle.

'They are bringing him here!' cried Rose, cowering into her husband's breast in terror. 'Oh, do not let them! Why should they bring him here?—this is not his home. Let him be taken to Nantsillan.'

Gerans disengaged himself from her clinging arms. He looked steadily through the window, then he turned quickly back, and said: 'Stay, stay here, Rose. Do not leave the room. Father, this is not Dennis. Prepare your mind for another and worse disaster.' He had recognised his red-topped boots on the legs of the man who was being borne by the eight. He knew that Constantine had put them on that morning.

The old Squire stood up, trembling like an aspen, with white face.

'God be gracious to us!' he gasped. 'Give me your arm, Gerans. I—I find my feet fail me. Not—it is not—Constantine?'

In another moment the tramp of the feet was in the hall. Then with a sigh of relief the eight bearers put down their burden upon the long oak dinner table, withdrew the oars and wiped their brows with their sleeves.

The ninth man placed the bundle at the foot of the dead man who lay on the gate—a man in a suit of Gerans' clothes, with his fine frilled shirt, and with his red-topped boots; and with his white face streaked with blood from a wound in the forehead where a bullet had pierced his brain. In death, Constantine bore a strange and striking likeness to his brother who now stood nearly as white, and with as rigid a face, bending over him.

'Here, your honour,' said the man who had carried the bundle, 'here be two pocket-books and a purse us have took out of his coat pockets, lest they should fall and be lost. I reckon they be chuck full of money. And us be dry, and would like a drop of cider.'

CHAPTER LIX.

RECONCILIATION.

THAT evening when Gerans came to his room for the night he found Rose, dressed as she had been, sitting on the sofa awaiting him. He was late, he had sat up long in conversation with his father. He was surprised to find Rose not gone to bed.

'Oh, Rose,' he said, with a little reproach in his tone, 'you will overtire yourself. You should be asleep at this hour.'

'No, Gerans, no,' she replied. 'I could not sleep till I had spoken with you. Tell me, tell me all. You think that Dennis shot Constantine, and then went away and destroyed himself. Why did he kill Constantine?'

'He bore him a grudge. Con had behaved very badly towards Loveday. Con had first married her secretly, and made her promise not to tell what had been done, but to leave to him the communication to his parents. He took advantage of her promise, and did not tell any one. Then, when it came out, he hid himself somewhere—where, perhaps, we shall never learn—and allowed Loveday to suppose he was dead. That was cruel and unjust treatment, and no doubt Dennis felt it keenly; he was a man of strong passions, and resented it. I had been speaking to him in the morning on the matter, but I could make nothing out of him. I suppose he was wild with rage because he had heard that Constantine was alive and home again. He left his house armed with a pistol. He went to find Con, and ask him his intentions, to know what he meant to do about Loveday. What ensued when they met no one now can tell, but I conjecture that there was a quarrel; Constantine did not satisfy Dennis, and Dennis, blind with anger, shot him. Then he woke to the full horror of what he had done, and destroyed himself.'

'That is the way in which you explain the whole story?' asked Rose, looking him questioningly in the eyes. 'That you think accounts for everything?'

'It explains all,' he answered, but with some hesitation.

'Gerans,' said Rose, with a firmness unusual in her, 'Gerans, dear husband, no—it was not so.'

'Rose!' he exclaimed, and shuddered. 'Rose! enough. It is explained.'

'No, Gerans, no. This will not do. You shall know the whole truth. I will not hide anything from you. No, Gerans, it was not so at all—Dennis Penhalligan shot Constantine because he mistook him for you.'

'Rose! Rose!'

'I have more to say. I am guilty, I, even I, of the death of Constantine and of Dennis. It was I, by my vanity and love of admiration, who lured Dennis on, till he was mad with love for me and hate for you. But, oh, Gerans, I swear to you, by the God who stands above the starry sky, that I have not loved any but you.'

'I will believe you,' he said, sadly. 'I have always trusted you. I have loved you—in spite of all.'

'In spite of my folly, my temper, my wicked words!' she said, and her tears began to flow. 'Oh, Gerans! I know now how wicked I have been. Here, in this very room, I treated you cruelly, when you returned with inflamed eyes from St. Ives. You asked me to stay with you, and I would not. I wanted to be away with the company below.' She threw herself on her knees before him. 'I am unworthy of you, Gerans; indeed, indeed, I am.'

He tried to raise her. 'Say no more, Rose. Your acknowledgment of having done wrong is the utmost you can do to efface the past.'

'I will not rise,' she said, 'till you know everything. I will tell you all, I will tell you what the thoughts of my heart were, as well as the words I said. I will not be forgiven till you know the truth as clearly as I can put it.'

'Rose, I also have to ask your pardon. I was too yielding to my father.'

'No, Gerans, you were right, and I was wrong. You did not oppose your father, because my whims were unreasonable. You were right not to let me have my own way. Because I have taken my course it has led me to this.'

He raised her from the floor, and made her sit by his side on the sofa; and there he, with his arm round her, and her wet

face in his breast, listened to the whole story of her frivolity, her play with Dennis—to his coming and standing outside the window on the previous evening. She told him of the ride to church on Phœbus, of everything that had passed on that expedition, of her brief repentance in church, and the return of her bad spirit on the way home ; she told him of her foolish jealousy of Loveday ; she told him of the kiss Dennis had given her at the well. She hid nothing from him. 'But, oh, Gerans, I never, never, loved any one but you, and I wanted to make you love me more by forcing you to become jealous.'

'But I was not jealous.'

'No—because you could not believe me as bad as I was.' He drew her close to his heart, and the bond between them was resealed, to last unstrained, unbroken, till death.

. . . . . .

The brothers-in-law were buried the same day, and at the same time. Indeed, the two coffins were borne to the church in one procession—first that of Constantine, then that of Penhalligan, and one body of mourners attended both—first walked Squire Gaverock with Loveday on his arm, then Gerans with Madam Loveys, then Mr. Loveys and Rose, and finally Anthony junior.

The news of the deaths of Dennis and of Constantine Gaverock had spread through the country. It was in the papers. Thus Loveday had been apprised of her brother's and husband's simultaneous decease. She sent at once to Marsland for Paul Featherstone. When he came to the cottage, she told him everything. The necessity for keeping silence was removed.

One request she made, that Juliot might never be told of her husband's treachery. Let her know that he was dead—not that he had led her into a dishonourable marriage, which cast a stain on her child.

Paul was too astonished at the revelation to be able to determine at once what should be done.

'I must return immediately to Nantsillan,' said Loveday, earnestly, entreatingly, to Mr. Featherstone. 'I must attend the funeral of my brother ; and I will go, if need be, on my knees to Mr. Gaverock to beseech him to keep the secret of my marriage. It need never be known now.'

Nothing had come out at the double inquest. One man had been found shot through the head, the other through the heart, both killed by the same weapon, a double-barrelled pistol. Dennis was found in the wood, lying dead on the dry leaves; Constantine was washed ashore by the tide in the cove. It was not till long after that the boat in the Iron Gate was discovered. The tide had carried his body out of Porthiern, and cast it up below the waterfall.

No motive could be attributed to Dennis for killing him. No one but the Gaverocks knew of the marriage. Little Ruth was called, to account for Penhalligan going out with the pistol. She was able most confidently to assert that Mr. Constantine had not been to the cottage, and that Mr. Dennis had complained of annoyance from a dog that haunted him. Who had seen the dog? No one else. The supposition arrived at was that Mr. Penhalligan was suffering from disturbance of the brain, that accidentally he had shot Mr. Constantine Gaverock, and that then, horrorstruck at what he had done, he had destroyed himself.

The verdict on Constantine was 'Accidental death;' that on Dennis was, 'Suicide whilst in a state of unsound mind.' Neither Rose nor Gerans was called to give evidence. Properly, Rose ought to have been summoned, as she had given the first notice of a tragedy, but she was spared the painfulness of so doing. The old Squire deposed to the finding of the body of Dennis; no evidence appeared necessitating the call of Gerans. That was well, for he could not have kept back the subject of conversation with Dennis if closely interrogated. The real cause of the murder and suicide was never known to Loveday or to the Squire; two only knew it, and they kept it locked in their own breasts.

Madam Loveys with her son and husband would not return to Towan after the funeral. The lady had ordered a carriage to await them in the village to carry them home. She made her son mount the box, and put her husband inside, and then, when they were seated, entered the carriage herself, and ordered the coachman to drive on. As soon as old Gaverock with Loveday, Gerans, and Rose, and the servant had returned to Towan, the Squire called his son

and daughters-in-law into the library, and bade them be seated.

The old man was greatly altered—his hair was greyer and less rough, his eyes had lost their commanding flash, his complexion was less hale, his hand less steady, his gait less confident, his voice was lower, and his manner had ceased to be boisterous.

'Is the door shut behind you, Gerans?'

'Yes, father.'

'My children,' said the Squire, and his eyes as he said 'my children' rested on Loveday as well as Rose, 'we have now a single duty to perform, a duty that has been delayed too long. Our Loveday must have right done her. She must receive immediate acknowledgment. I blame myself for having denied it to her so long. Now it shall be accorded to her fully and publicly. This house is henceforth her home, our name is her name, we form but one family, and I am her father as truly as I am yours, Rose. From me she can count on receiving henceforth deference and love.'

'Yes,' said Gerans, 'so it must be.'

Then, Loveday, who was pale as snow but composed, said, 'No, dear Mr. Gaverock. If I have any claims upon you, let me claim your submission to one thing I ask. Let the past be forgotten. Do not let it be known that I married Constantine.'

'Not—why not?'

'For his sake,' she answered. 'We must think of the dead, and spare his memory. I may say for my poor brother's sake also; I would have his memory also spared. If it transpire that I was married to Constantine privately, and that he did not let his marriage be known, people will at once suspect that the death of Constantine was not accidental, that Dennis shot him out of revenge for the wrong he conceived that he had done to his sister. I do not myself believe this—but that is what people will say.'

The old man considered. This was certainly true.

'Did Constantine not communicate with you after he disappeared and we believed him dead?' asked Gerans.

'No,' replied Loveday. 'I received no letter, no tidings of any sort from him. Till quite recently I, like you, believed him to be dead.'

'I suppose we shall never know where he was during the time between when he was washed off the keel of the "Mermaid" and when he reappeared the other day here to meet, as it proved, his death.'

The old man said this musingly, and Loveday did not contradict him. He never did learn where Constantine had been, for Loveday never told. She held back this from the Squire lest she should add to *his* shame and sorrow, and he held back from her the truth about Constantine breaking open his drawer and stealing her money lest he should add to *her* sorrow.

'I do not ask of you to publish what for my sake, for the sake of Constantine, and for the sake of Dennis, had better be kept secret,' said Loveday; 'let all that miserable story be buried from the world, and forgotten, if possible, by ourselves.'

'Come by me, Loveday,' said the old man, gently. When she obeyed, he drew her hand within his, and stroked it with his rough but unnerved hand.

'My Loveday, my dear, very dear Loveday,' he said, 'I am sixty-five years old, and I thought I knew women, but I am only beginning to know them now. Loveday, I did think it was conferring a great honour on you to allow you to bear our name, but I am not so sure of that now.' He leaned his elbow on the table, and thrust his left hand through his grey hair, whilst clear tears rolled down his cheeks. 'Dishonour has been brought on the name of Gaverock by—by my son, and perhaps you do well to refuse to bear it. Aye, though you may not know all, it is so—dishonour.'

Loveday rose and put her arms round his neck, whilst the tears welled out of her eyes.

'No, dear Mr. Gaverock, do not say that. It is because I love and respect that name that I would ward off from it the breath of reproach.' Then she kissed him.

He still held her hand. 'But you will stay with us here, you will make this a home? I will not be domineering or violent any more. Gerans, I have to ask your forgiveness. Here, before your wife, I must acknowledge that you are sometimes right, and that I esteem you for holding your ground when your conscience forbids a surrender. Rose, I must ask your forgiveness also. I have

tried you also. I have been to blame. My poor wife, I wish she were here, I would ask her forgiveness also. I did not understand her. By the way, Gerans, have you an old hat that will fit me? I won't go about bareheaded any more—by Golly! I won't.'

CHAPTER LX.

A BED OF VIOLETS.

A TWELVEMONTH—nay, more—had passed, winter had set in and tossed its foam over the cliffs, and the wind had carried the roar of the wintry Atlantic far inland. Spring, summer, autumn passed, and now as the last leaves were shed in Nantsillan glen Loveday was stooping over her old bed of purple violets, picking a bunch. She had a little basket on her left arm, slung on the wrist; she wore long black mittens from her elbows to her hands. She had no bonnet on, but a shawl was thrown over her head and pinned under her chin. The fern in the coombe was as brown as copper, but the moss in revenge was showing itself vividly green. Here and there the blue bugloss, and with it pink cranes-bill, remained in flower, defying the wintry winds, smiling under a clouded sky. A few rooks were cawing, and jackdaws chattering; a yellow finch swinging on a maple twig was piping. No bird was disturbed by Loveday. She stooped and passed her fingers among the green leaves, and plucked each violet that was discovered, and made them into a little cluster. Some were in the basket; she put her bunches into the basket, not the several violets as picked. The shawl over her head was much the same in colour as the flowers she gathered. Her gown was black, with a white lace fringe about the sleeves and flounce.

She was so engrossed in gathering violets that she did not hear the fall of a step behind her.

'How do you do, Miss—Mrs. I mean—Loveday?'

She started, rose upright, turned and the colour came into her cheeks and a light into her dark eyes.

'Oh, Mr. Featherstone, I am so heartily glad to see you!'

'Excuse me,' he said, 'I apologise for calling you by your Christian name, but I was hardly able to decide by what name to address you with strict truth and to avoid giving pain.' He was the same stiff, pragmatical man, haggling about trifles, yet sincere to his heart's core. She held out her hand to him, after passing the violets from the right hand to the left.

He bowed over it, and with old-fashioned courtesy, old-fashioned even then, pressed his lips to her fingers.

'Your hand is fragrant with violets,' he said, 'and what marvel, when you are as a violet yourself, sweet, and hiding beneath the leaves.'

'Pardon me, sir,' said Loveday, 'I am standing on the leaves; look above me, all are fallen.'

'I was speaking metaphorically,' said Paul, with a slight tone of vexation, but so slight that it was lost as soon as perceived. 'I have ventured to search for you, madam, as I doubted how to ask after you at the door of Towan. Should I inquire for Miss Penhalligan, or for Mrs. Rock—pardon me, Mrs. Gaverock, I mean. I was unaware to what extent circumstances were known, and under which name you were now pleased to pass. So I wandered and waited about till I lighted upon you, and now, most appropriately, I find you at a violet bed. You will take no offence, madam, if I say that in my mind the violet is so associated with your sweet self that at Marsland my sister Juliot, who shares my views in everything, and myself always regard the violet bed under the wall as sacred to the memory of one whom we have both learned to love and revere.'

Loveday would have been puzzled by his odd address had she not known the man, and been able to allow for his formal ways. She was really pleased to see him, she had the warmest regard for him, she valued him as a man perfectly true, sincere, upright; she smiled at his quaint ways and rather liked them, they savoured of old-world manners, and there was a lack of these in Towan which made her ready to condone some exaggeration in Paul Featherstone.

'How is Juliot?' she asked. 'I have longed to hear, yet did not like to write.'

'Juliot is well, and the little Con is also well and very flourishing,' answered Paul Featherstone. 'There will be

a Stanbury of Stanbury yet. I have spent forty pounds in obtaining a royal licence for young Master Con to assume the name of Stanbury in place of Rock, so that henceforth that little urchin is Squire Stanbury of Stanbury, and our dear mother's name will flourish anew in him.'

'What—what does Juliot know?' asked Loveday, timidly.

'Nothing. I have stood as a wall about her, fencing her from the knowledge, and now all danger is past. She still believes in a Mr. Rock, and supposes he has been drowned. Her great grief is that his body has not been recovered. I would not for anything in this world that she should be undeceived. Juliot is a child in heart, and has the faith of a child. Were she to learn what a wicked —excuse me—were she to know all, her faith in the goodness of mankind would receive such a shock that the child-like spirit in her would droop and die. No—she shall never know—never, so help me, God!' He took off his hat at the last words. Then he covered again and continued, 'And I—I also must ask, what is known here?'

'Nothing,' answered Loveday. 'That is to say, only Mr. Gaverock and Gerans know the truth, and it is their wish now, as well as mine, that the past should be buried.'

'So the marriage of Constantine Gaverock and Loveday Penhalligan is to remain hidden in the parish register of the church in Exeter where you were married?'

'Yes. It is so, indeed.'

'Then,' said Paul, 'should you ever be married again it seems to me that the most suitable proceeding would be for you to be re-married in that same church, that the two registers might be preserved in the same book, so no disguise or evasion of the truth would be needed, and such disguise or evasion would be very painful, and hardly to be justified.'

Loveday coloured, then laughed, and said: 'We need not consider remote eventualities, Mr. Featherstone. We will talk of Juliot and little Con. Is he much grown? Is he a dear pet? How many teeth has he? What colour is his hair—and his eyes?'

'Pardon me, at this moment I cannot talk of little Con. He is a dear little daisyflower. But who thinks of the daisy when he lights on the violet? Nor is that such a

remote contingency as you consider, that is if you would deign—that is to say—if your humble servant should find favour in your eyes.'

The bunch of violets fell from Loveday's hand, and the colour deserted her cheeks.

'I am well aware,' continued Paul; he removed his hat and, kneeling stiffly, began to pick up the violets that she had let fall. 'I am well aware,' he said whilst thus engaged, 'that I am unworthy to solicit such a treasure. I have sinned against you most deeply, and should not dare to appear before you now were I not convinced that in you every sweetness and beauty of soul were to be found, the quality of mercy, the grace of generosity included. I had the mad folly at one time to doubt you. Now, reviewing the past, I am covered with shame at the thought that I should have been so wicked, so graceless, as to doubt *you*. You—you are to me the ideal of womanhood, all gentleness, truth, self-surrender, pity. I do not ask you if you have cared for me. I know that when you were under my roof you suffered the bitterest of pains. I know that then into the pure temple of your soul no thought of me could enter, dedicated then as it was to another, though that other was unworthy. I ask only to make some amends to you for the wrong I did in mistrusting you, and I ask for Juliot's sake. She wants a sister to guide, comfort, and help her. I know my own unworthiness, but I know also that as you have seen Juliot you must love her. So—take me for my sister's sake.'

Loveday was trembling. She knew the man at her feet, his perfect integrity, his chivalrous honour and love of truth; she was not blind to his weaknesses.

'Madam!' he said, 'I have picked up all the violets. I do not ask you to speak. What shall I do with the violets? Am I to take the little posy and carry it away with me as the only remembrance I have of the one woman whom I love and regard above every other woman under heaven? Or may I put the violets into your basket, and help you to carry the sweet and pretty burden?'

She hesitated but for a moment, and then held out the little basket to him.

The air about them was fragrant with violets.

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The bells of Wellcombe were ringing a peal in the fresh summer air a twelvemonth after the events last recorded. The wind caried their music in waves inland, much as wave on wave flows with the tide upon the shore. At the entrance of the avenue to Marsland is an arch of laurel and fir and flowers.

Many people are gathered in the avenue, more outside, lining the pretty lane past the spring, up the hill, away towards the Stratton road. All are in their Sunday clothes; the children have bunches of flowers in their hands.

Hark!

The cracking of postillions' whips are heard, and down the hill amidst cheers comes a carriage, the horses and the boys with white favours. The cheers swell into a roar of applause. At the entrance to the avenue the carriage draws up, and a servant lets down the steps. Then Paul Featherstone descends, and holds out his hand for a lady.

At the same moment from the gateway appears Juliot in black, with a widow's cap, and a baby on her left arm, running forward to put her disengaged arm round the lady, and laugh and cry together for joy of heart.

'Welcome! welcome! darling Loveday!'

Then the bride, who is in a soft grey silk, with white bonnet, veil, and orange flowers, with a face almost as white as the orange blossoms, but with her large dark eyes alight with pleasure and gratitude, bows to the tenants and cottagers who crowd round to touch and take her hand, and the children to thrust their posies on her.

'I think,' said Paul, 'that we shall have to change the name of this place from Mars-land to the Land of Venus, for no wars will be fought here in this home of love. This, Juliot, you will perceive is a sort of a joke!'

'Oh, Paul! how glad I am to hear you joking again! You are so humorous.'

. . . . . .

'Good heavens, Loveday! how came you by that?' asked Paul one day, when all his wife's effects were being unpacked and arranged in her room and drawers. The china vases, relics of her mother, had been placed on the mantelshelf. The sampler had been hung in the hall. The piano had been put in the drawing-room. Paul pointed

to none of these things, but to a small double-barrelled pistol.

Loveday shuddered. 'Oh, Paul! I do not know how that has come among my goods. It—it——' She did not finish her sentence.

He was turning and examining it.

'Loveday, this is very singular. Do you see this little silver shield let in, with our arms on it—a chevron between three ostrich plumes, and above it P.F., my uncle's initials as well as mine. The pistol has never been mine: it must have belonged to him. How did you come by it?'

'Oh, Paul, dear Paul, throw it into the sea! Do not let it remain with us. I did not know it was in my box. That was the weapon which robbed poor Constantine and Dennis of their lives.'

Mr. Featherstone put the weapon down, as if it burnt his fingers, but he still looked at it with a puzzled face.

'But, Loveday, how did Dennis come by it?'

Just then, with a shiver, Loveday thought of the red-waistcoated pedlar, and then of the picture in the hall of the old rover Featherstone.

'Paul,' she said, 'I cannot tell you now. I will some day; but it seems to me as though the spirit of your uncle could not rest till it had wrought out its revenge on the family of Gaverock, and taken blood for blood. We will speak about it another time.'

. . . . . .

'Juliot!' said Paul one day, on coming home to Marsland from a ride to Stanbury, whither he had been summoned, 'the storms have been ripping the roof again at the little Squire's place. We must make it snug for him, but it will cost money.'

'Oh, please,' said Loveday, raising her dark pleading eyes, 'if you want slates, would you mind ordering them from Captain Quance, of the Towan quarries. I have a specimen slab in my bedroom, which I brought with me when I first came here. He—he almost forced me to take it; he was very kind.'

'Certainly. I will send a boat thither for a load. But pray, Loveday, what are you going to do with that red flannel?'

'I am going to send it home by my little maid Ruth,

before Christmas, to an old woman, Mary Tregothnan, who suffers from rheumatism. And—dear Paul—you have lost Willy Penrose. Would you mind taking on Ruth's brother as stable boy? He once got for me two addled gull's eggs, which was very thoughtful of him, and I do not like to seem ungrateful.'

'To be sure I will,' answered Paul. 'Loveday, you have only to ask me for anything and you shall have it; to express a wish, and it shall be fulfilled. Since you have been here the whole house has been sweet with your presence, as with the fragrance of violets, that bloom and are sweet throughout the year. I *love* the *day* that brought you here, and made Loveday mine own. Heaven has made my day of life a day of love. Which,' he added after a pause, 'though it sounds like a joke, is not a joke, but a plain statement of fact.'

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